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CHRIS NELSON

CREATING
**STYLISH & SEXY
PHOTOGRAPHY**

A GUIDE TO GLAMOUR PORTRAITURE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS	6
Your Unique Subject	6
The Impetus	6
THE RECIPIENT	7
WHAT IS GLAMOUR?	8
THE VISION	9
SEEING HER BEAUTY	10
CLASSIC BEAUTY	12
Categorizing the Look	12
Wow! She's Beautiful!	12
THE DIVIDING LINE	13
FASHION IMAGES	14
HIGH KEY	15
ARTISTIC IMAGES	16
TAKING SHAPE	16
PIN-UP IMAGES	18
PORTRAIT LENGTH	18
SENSUAL IMAGES	20
ABOUT THE APPROACH	20
PROVOCATIVE IMAGES	22
UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENT ..	24
The Planning Session	25
Self-Rating Surveys	25
MAKE HER SHINE	25
PRODUCTS SHE WANTS	26
Calendars	26
Centerfold Posters	26
Session Books	27
Designer Albums	27
IT'S A SUCCESS	27
BEFORE THE SHOOT	28
Studio Atmosphere	28
FRIENDS	28
Touching the Subject	29



Conversation	29	EMPHASIZING CURVES.	42
HAIR AND MAKEUP.	30	Dynamic Posing	42
GET EDUCATED	30	The C Pose	42
CLOTHING AND PROPS.	32	REMEMBER THE RULE OF TWOS	43
THE FABRIC SHOP	33	THE S POSE	44
FACE FIRST	34	TIGHTEN IT UP	44
A PERSONAL APPROACH.	34	A SLIM TUMMY AND WAIST.	46
LIGHTING FACES.	36	Create an Illusion	46
Short Lighting	36	SHORT AND SWEET	46
Broad Lighting	36	Conceal the Area.	47
Fashion Lighting.	36	Create a Distraction	47
Split Lighting	37	LONG, SLIM LEGS.	48
CATCHLIGHTS.	37	A LONG STORY	48
MORE FACIAL LIGHTING.	38	ENHANCING THE BREASTS	50
Loop Lighting.	38	SHADOWY FIGURE	50
Butterfly Lighting	38	CORRECTIVE POSING TIPS.	52
Rembrandt Lighting	38	GET IT IN-CAMERA	52
FACIAL ANGLES.	40	BLACK BACKGROUNDS	54
Full Face	40	INTO THE FOG.	54
Two-Thirds.	41	WHITE BACKGROUNDS.	56
Profiles	41	NIX THE FUN-HOUSE EFFECT	56
REAR VIEW	41		



GELS AND SECONDARY

BACKGROUNDS	58
From a White Base	58
From a Black Base	58
ABOUT GELS	58
SHE'S RED-HOT	60
AMERICAN BEAUTY	60
MIRRORS	62
GETTING THE GOODS	62
WINDOW LIGHT	64
A DISTINCTIVE LOOK FOR	
BIGGER PROFITS	64
THE WET LOOK	66
EXERCISE YOUR OPTIONS	67
HOT LIGHTS	68
SHEER GENIUS	69
FLASH OUTDOORS	70
Lighting Equipment	70
The Flash As a Main Light	71
FLASH SETTINGS	72
FLASH POSITION	73
MAN-MADE LOCATIONS	74
INSURANCE	75
NATURAL LOCATIONS	76
The Beach	76
DISCRETION ADVISED	76
The Waterfall	77
A Field of Flowers	77
BLACK & WHITE IMAGES	78
CLOTHING ALERT	79
ENHANCING THE EYES	80
INTENSIFYING THE EYE COLOR	81
THE LIPS AND TEETH	82
The Lips	82
The Teeth	82
PUCKER UP	82
ENHANCING THE SKIN	84
Basic Retouching	84
Make Her Glow	84



Porcelain Skin	85
A DUAL APPROACH	85
THE LIQUIFY FILTER	86
MUM IS THE WORD	86
BIG SALES	88
Plan for Success	88
Screenings	88
Setting the Mood	89
MORE SALES TIPS	89
CONCLUSION	90
Index	92

PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS

YOUR UNIQUE SUBJECT

In commissioned glamour portrait photography, your clients are the women themselves, not a magazine, advertising firm, or modeling agency. In fact, that's the difference between this book and many others devoted to glamour, boudoir, or fine-art figure photography. You're not paying her to pose; she's paying you to produce an image that flatters her femininity.

THE IMPETUS

There are many reasons why a woman might have glamour portraits made. Here are just a few of the motivations my clients have shared:

- **Special hobby**—Jenni's fiancé works as a bar manager. He admired a beer poster that depicts
- **Fitness portfolio**—Dawn, a women's fitness figure competitor, wanted a portfolio for an upcoming competition. We shot in a vacant warehouse; its edgy look complemented her cut physique. Dawn also wanted a few sexy shots. The combination of a grungy warehouse and her topless, tight, partially clad body created the look we were after. I asked her if her husband was the reason she wanted the sexy images. She said "Yes, but I have to like them first, so I guess they're for both of us."
- **Racy wedding gift**—Shannon came to my studio for a bridal session. She brought her maid

We took inspiration from a concept used in a beer poster to create this image of Jenni. Utilizing a 4x6-foot softbox and a reflector, we glued the bottle caps to a skin-toned bra-and-panty set, removed the shoulder straps. We made a poster and bedspread with the image as a gift.





ABOVE—This was Shannon’s favorite pose from her bridal glamour session. She chose the image for her album cover because it was playful and cute, but not too revealing. **RIGHT**—Each of these subjects had individual sessions, but they wanted a hot group portrait, too.

THE RECIPIENT

A woman often commissions a glamour portrait as a gift for her husband, boyfriend, or fiancé, but just as often it’s for her. It supports her image of herself as physically attractive.

of honor, Kim, with her for moral support and to help with her dress. I’d photographed Kim’s wedding a year earlier, and we’d done some bridal boudoir images as a part of her bridal session. “I want a gift for Scott—a little album,” Shannon said. “Kim can give it to him just before the ceremony.” Shannon wanted something playful and sexy that included red roses, like the ones in her bridal bouquet. We decided to pose her seminude, lying on the train of her dress, which was sprinkled with red rose petals.

- **Group images**—Three friends came to the studio to create glamour portraits for their respective husbands. They donned short shorts and



tall boots and posed for a sexy group portrait to be given to the three guys as well.

You see, anyone could be a potential glamour client. All of these women had a different reason for doing a glamour session. As a result, the final presentation of their images was also different—large portraits, session books, portfolios, and glamour albums. Yet each woman had a similar goal: to create an image that highlighted her femininity. Every subject wanted to be seen as attractive, alluring, and sexy—and they were all happy to pay for it.

WHAT IS GLAMOUR?



“**W**e all want to look sexy and beautiful,” says glamour-portrait client Tarina, “but not trashy.” There it is; if your goal is to add glamour portraiture to your studio’s offerings, you need to understand this critical principle. As a glamour photographer, your goal is not to stoke male fantasies (although you’ll undoubtedly do

LEFT—Leissa wanted something dramatic, so we chose to use hot lights to create a cinematic look. To retain the warm color, I only partially corrected for the tungsten cast. She’s a hairdresser, so I used a strong separation light to spotlight her great hair. The fur prop added to the richness of the image. **BELOW**—Jessica wanted a figure image with imagination. When she showed me the bra-and-panty set, I knew we wanted to do a high-key image. I used the pink boa and umbrella to match the pink in her outfit. The bird’s-eye camera angle was chosen to emphasize her height and the gentle C curve emphasized her figure.



Roxy showed up in mid-December to make a Christmas present for her fiancé and brought his pulling truck as a prop. I told her it wouldn't fit in the studio, so we'd be working outside in the snow. The scarf you see in the image was an accent to a full-length white wool coat. "What am I going to wear?" she asked. I pulled the scarf from around her shoulders and said, "You can wear this." "Just this?" she asked. I'd worked with Roxy before, so I knew I wasn't out of bounds. "You can wear your heels, too," I said. After a long pause, she said "I like it. . . ." The big diesel was idling with the heater running full blast as my assistant and I set up the lighting. Roxy was outside for less than a minute and then dove back into the truck to get dressed. The image was used for a poster, and it got her beau's attention. We still laugh about that session today.

that indirectly) but to help create your female clients' vision of what it means to be attractive and sexy—and that vision is almost never tawdry or pornographic.

That's why my studio calls our images glamour portraits rather than boudoir images. We came to that decision after discovering that many of our clients found the word "boudoir" kind of scary, and the connotation . . . well, on the pornographic side. In actuality, there may be no difference between a glamour and a boudoir image, but clients perceive boudoir images to be about sex for the sake of sex. If an image is considered glamorous, however, it should depict the subject's beauty, not her sexuality.

THE VISION

There is no one-size-fits-all glamour portrait. The key to a successful session and sale is learning how your subject sees herself and wants to be depicted.



As a photographic genre, glamour can include images that go far beyond what falls into the boudoir category. Depending on your client, glamour might include fashion-inspired headshots like you see in magazines, curvaceous poses with the subject in a tight black dress, seductive images with lacy lingerie, etc. And if, to another woman, "glamour" means lying naked under a waterfall with water splashing over her, that works too.

SEEING HER BEAUTY

When you create a glamour portrait, you help your subject see her own beauty. “I can’t believe that’s me,” Krystal said as I displayed her image on my camera’s LCD. “That’s not what I see when I look into the mirror.”

Women are usually their own toughest critics. As a photographer, I turn their perceptions around. I believe there is beauty in every client. I

know that sounds cliché, but it’s true—and it’s not hard to find if you adopt the right mind-set. Not every woman is a potential Victoria’s Secret model, and you don’t need to try to make your subject look like one. Instead, make it your goal to exceed the perception she has of herself when she looks into the mirror.

Jamie wanted a nude portrait, but nothing graphic—so I posed her front-down. The $\frac{2}{3}$ view narrowed her face. Squeezing her cheek to her shoulder and her glance across her nose gave her a playful expression. Arching her back and bringing her partially onto her knees made her legs look great and narrowed her waistline.



TOP RIGHT—Amy is a country girl, so why not make her Daisy Duke? I positioned the hayloft doors to create a narrow strip of daylight on the bales. The low camera angle lengthened Amy's body. She was posed so her front leg hid most of the back leg, creating a long, slim look. The tie from her top hid stretch marks she has from pregnancy.

BOTTOM RIGHT—This image is all about Brittany's beautiful face. A natural rock overhang gave the overhead daylight some direction. A small reflector bounced a little light onto her face, especially her eyes. Bringing her left leg forward, bending her knee, and a slight arch in her back gave her body some curves and slimmed her waistline.



CLASSIC BEAUTY

CATEGORIZING THE LOOK

My goal is to understand my subject's unique perception of herself and turn it into a look for her portraits.

In my mind, I've categorized these looks into six styles, which I'll describe over the next several pages. Most of the time there's some overlap between styles, but the mental framework is really

useful for you and your client—especially when it comes to determining what kind of look she wants.

WOW! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

If the viewer's reaction to your image is, "Wow, she's beautiful," this portrait fits into the classic beauty style. Classic beauty images can be anything from headshots to full-length portraits and will be

LEFT—It's really retro, but hot lights are one of my newest styles. Jenni was lit in one of our studio's hallways with three lights: a main, fill, and separation. Two lights were used in the background to create depth. For a timeless look, we used one of Jenni's favorite black dresses and a moving S pose (the "model walk") to show off her curves. **RIGHT**—Erin struck a C pose for this window-light image. A 72-inch reflector added fill light.





ABOVE—This classic head-and-shoulders portrait features Ilicia's face first. The high camera angle and positioning her eyes in the upper-right third of the frame accomplished this. She chose the bra because she wanted cleavage but didn't want it to command too much attention. **RIGHT**—This simple portrait was lit with natural light in our studio's window light room. A full-length Larson reflector was used for fill. To emphasize Heather's face, I shot with the lens wide open, allowing most of her body to fall out of focus.

unmistakably feminine with a degree of elegance. First and foremost, the image is beautiful; any sexuality is subtly implied.

Keep in mind that the choice of clothing doesn't determine this. The subject could be fully clothed or nude. If it's a full-length image, a beauty shot could be posed and lit to show off an hourglass figure (usually short lit to emphasize the roundness of the subject's breasts and hips, with the head tipped toward her high shoulder). If the image is a



head-and-shoulders shot, the head is usually tipped toward the high shoulder, emphasizing the eyes, lips, facial structure, and hair.

THE DIVIDING LINE

Portraits that fall into this category need not feature clothed models. What sets beauty images apart from other styles is that the emphasis is on the subject's femininity, not her sexuality.

FASHION IMAGES

When you think of fashion portraits, think of magazines—anything you might see in a cosmetics, jewelry, or clothing advertisement—or even an editorial feature. This is one of our clients' most popular looks because it's what they see all around them in the media. Often, women bring in magazine clippings and ask us to create a similar portrait.

Regardless of cropping (from headshots to full-length portraits), these images are usually fashion-lit, meaning the photographer uses a large main light with butterfly or broad lighting. Since the models seen in magazines and catalogs are usually clothed, so are your subjects when they pose for this type of image.

LEFT—This deep sandstone gorge acted like a natural strip light. We took advantage of the directional light, placing Kellie along the sandstone face. To put light on her face, I had her look toward the sky and augmented the overhead light with a reflector. The S pose accentuated her curves, and we chose a black & white presentation to eliminate distraction. **RIGHT**—The look of high-contrast black & white is a timeless seller. Erin's coy over-the-shoulder look, and covering and turning her breasts away from the camera, sets the tone for the image. The dangling bra adds the finishing touch.





ABOVE—Never overlook a good headshot—they sell. Often they're in black & white, but here we wanted to show off Alissa's brilliant red hair. Her Mona Lisa smile and bare shoulders added sex appeal. Alissa was lit with a large softbox in front and above her. Two strobes with parabolics were aimed at the background to create the high key effect. **RIGHT**—Alle is a fitness model and instructor. We wanted something sexy, and we wanted to show off her toned physique, so we used the business-style top worn open, along with the Spandex workout shorts. We feathered the light from a large softbox at camera left across Alle to bring out her curves, toned legs, and abs.

HIGH KEY

High key images are a popular option for fashion-type portraits. Fortunately, the white seamless backdrops often used for these setups are inexpensive and easy to come by.



ARTISTIC IMAGES



Think “abstract” when describing this look. These are images like those you might see in an art gallery—and a lot of women would like to see themselves there. Unlike any other style of glamour portrait, form—not faces—usually dominates. As a result, you can leave traditional portrait-lighting techniques behind and feel free to experiment. Look to famous painters, sculptors, and graphic designers for inspiration. If a client is willing, I usually try to include at least a couple of images made in this style during each session.

TOP—Gwen’s husband is a pilot, so we needed to pose her with his airplane. The triangular shapes made with Gwen’s pose contrast with the elliptical shape of the plane. We chose the green bustier to complement the plane’s muted gold color. The mid-day sun provide the main light, and we used a strong fill flash from inside the hangar to balance the sky in the background and to keep the front-left side of the plane from falling into shadow. **BOTTOM**—This image of Roxy, made for a calendar, upsets expectations—you don’t normally see a leggy, topless brunette casually walking her monitor lizard. We created this image with natural daylight, a large reflector, and a flash to camera right as a secondary main. A 200mm lens was used, and I assumed a really low camera angle (I was on the ground!) to emphasize her long legs and height. **FACING PAGE**—We wanted to convey the idea of bondage and imprisonment. We posed Jackie head-down make the image more universal. This image was lit with a single overhead strip box with no fill light.

TAKING SHAPE

In artistic portraits, the face is often turned away from the camera. This approach allows viewers to focus on the mood that’s created.



PIN-UP IMAGES

When you think of a pin-up girl, you think of sexy and cute. The goal of a pin-up image is to tease and titillate. With these portraits, the subject's expression and body language make the image. Your photographic technique will also be used to support and accentuate the usually playful, fun, and sexy message. Because body language is so important, pin-up poses are almost always full- or three-quarter-length.

PORTRAIT LENGTH

Because body language is such an important part of this look, pin-up images are almost always $\frac{3}{4}$ or full length.



LEFT—Pin-ups are a tease. I try to emulate the style of famous pin-up artists, and this one is in the Vargas style. The high-key background makes Angela the singular focus. The pin-up look is playful and leggy, and in the last few years it has been a great seller for my studio. **BELOW**—Pin-ups are fun. While men and women see different things in glamour images, I've found both appreciate the playfulness of the pin-up style. Shilo loves pink, so we chose this outfit at the consultation. She arrived at the session with the sucker—the perfect accent. Done in the Vargas style, I've used this image to promote our pin-up style.

FACING PAGE—Denise's image combines the stark look of a Vargas image with the theme of an Elvgren print. When photographing pin-ups, use carefully selected camera angles and poses, and often high heels, to give the subject a long-legged look.





SENSUAL IMAGES



A sensual image is one that is designed to overwhelm the senses (in this case, the eyes) with a vision of a desirable body. It is a voluptuousness of the mind, taking pleasure from the body and, at the same time, freeing the spirit from its bonds. There you have it: amateur psychology and metaphysical postulation from the author.

Sensual images need to impart a dreamy, veiled lustfulness—a kind of blissful surrender. For this reason, subjects are often posed reclining with their eyes closed or not making direct eye contact with the camera. This conveys a blissful, carefree, disconnectedness from the everyday world; the subject is absorbed in the pleasure of escape. It's a place we'd all like to be. Creating an image that helps us get there, if only for a while, can have tremendous value.

TOP—This image of Dana immersed in the water and lit by evening sweet light pleases our senses and imagination. The lines of her naked body are really beautiful, and because of the reflection, we get a circular view. The reflection required a really low, almost-in-the-water camera angle. **BOTTOM**—The snake is a metaphor for temptation, and its symmetrically curved body contrasts in color and shape with the curves of Roxy's torso. Roxy's body was lit with a medium softbox and a reflector, and a portable strobe with a snoot lit the snake.

ABOUT THE APPROACH

Images in the sensual category often impart a dreamy, veiled lustfulness and highlight a voluptuous form.

RIGHT—Katie's image is basically a silhouette outlining the curves of her body. Sensual images please the senses with sexual overtones. Shots like these require imagination, so we show only part of the body, allowing the viewer to mentally fill in the rest. **BELOW**—This image was inspired by one of Kim's favorite movies—*Flashdance*. We posed her in a shower set in my studio that we also use for rainy-day images of high-school seniors and children. A single 48-inch strip box feathered from above provided the lighting for this image. **BOTTOM**—The image of Terri's back and tush, attired in a beaded G-string and robe, radiates sexual overtones. The lighting was simple window light and a reflector.



PROVOCATIVE IMAGES

This category almost doesn't need an explanation. These images may look assertive or playful, but they *demand* to be looked at. The subjects often make direct eye contact with the camera—and not demurely, but with confidence.

While there are no clear-cut lines—many images could correctly be placed in more than one style—the structure that the categories I've presented create is helpful in several ways. First, categorizing images helps you develop a mental framework for your work and, therefore, helps you create images. Second, dividing the images into these categories helps each client decide which style she prefers. Third, it will help you talk to your client clearly

FACING PAGE—Tonya's not really a pole dancer, but she wanted to play one for her husband. Her pose, like all in the provocative category, demands attention. Her image is a good example of the Rule of Twos: body parts that come in pairs—feet, legs, knees, hips, breasts, shoulders, and arms—should be posed on different optical planes. Note the elegant C curve created by having Tonya arch her back.

about the kind of images she wants. If you prepare a slide show or portfolio of images and categorize them according to these styles, it will give you a common language for discussing images, planning her session, and ultimately giving the client exactly what she wants.

LEFT—Shilo commands the spotlight. This image was lit using a home-made spotlight attachment on a White Lightning strobe. Her pose, outfit, and expression exude sex appeal. **CENTER**—There's something primal and sexy about snakes. Jenni's boyfriend handles these ball pythons, and she wanted to pose with them to please him. Shot with fashion-type lighting, her body language and expression put the image into the provocative category. **RIGHT**—There's something sexy about a beautiful woman in the water, and a wet T-shirt just enhances the appeal. Winter's pose and expression give the image a beer poster look. A portable strobe at camera right supplied the main light. We positioned her to use the sunlight off her left shoulder as a separation light, and the light reflected off of the water served as fill.





UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENT

A glamour session is not only an image booster, it also provides a safe venue—and I can’t emphasize *safe* strongly enough—for your client to explore her sexy, sensual side. By “safe,” I mean that the client must feel no sexual pressure or have any worry whatsoever that some of the more intimate images you create will turn up anywhere that might prove embarrassing to her. “I think this is so sexy,” Rita said, holding up a sheer, tight, charcoal-colored top. “I bought it because I loved it, and I think I look really good in it. But on the way home, I thought, ‘Where the heck am I going to

wear this?’” My studio was it—and when you think about it, there aren’t that many other places.

It’s important that each subject realizes it’s your job to make her look good. Most of us have had our share of unflattering photos, so most people are apprehensive in front of the camera to begin with. In a more intimate situation, your client will feel even more vulnerable, so reassurance is critical. Your LCD is a valuable tool here, especially early in the session. Turning the camera around and showing your subject how good she looks can really put her mind at ease.

LEFT—Darla just wanted to look pretty in her chosen outfit. From her questionnaire and consultation, I knew her blue eyes and cleavage were two of her favorite attributes, so we set up this window light image to give her what she wanted. **RIGHT**—Your studio will often provide a safe environment for the subject to express her sexuality. Gayla loves fall and wanted to “play in the leaves.” We originally planned to do this outdoors, but the day of her session was rainy and cold, so I brought the leaves indoors.



Shantel's dad builds custom cycles, and Shantel helps him sell. We wanted a tough, in-your-face look, and the doorway at an old tire factory provided the perfect setting. We exaggerated her S pose to convey attitude and set the camera angle at breast level to add sex appeal. Natural daylight was directed by an overhang. A portable strobe augmented the light.

THE PLANNING SESSION

A planning session is a must; it helps you develop your approach to the shoot and allows you to get to know the client. Before the consultation, most of my clients will have had some experience with my studio—they've likely had a phone conversation with us and have often seen my work in displays or on my web site. When she arrives for the consultation, she already has respect for my work. Still, the face-to-face meeting is important; it's a chance to enhance impressions and begin to understand the subject's personality.

I suggest beginning the consultation by showing the client a slide show of your work. Doing so gives her another chance to gauge your work, and seeing what other women have done can help her generate portrait ideas. Also, her reactions to the images will give you some insight into her photographic tastes. As mentioned earlier, it helps to organize your slide show into the six glamour categories described so you'll have a common point of reference when talking about what she likes.

SELF-RATING SURVEYS

A short questionnaire that asks the subject to rate herself and her appearance is very valuable. This helps you determine what physical attributes she's proud of and which ones she's a little apprehensive about. Women are usually more critical of themselves than other people.

The questionnaire I use asks the subject what she does and doesn't like about her appearance.



It also asks her what she'd like to improve if she could. You get some pretty frank, sometimes humorous and often surprising answers, but it tells you what features to focus on and what you should try to hide in order to create a portrait she'll love.

MAKE HER SHINE

Don't take the consultation lightly. This is your best opportunity to learn what your client likes about her looks. Armed with that information, you can help arrive at a portrait concept that makes her look great in her eyes.

PRODUCTS SHE WANTS

Once you've created the images, what will you make with them? What does your subject want to take home? A big part of our consultation is devoted to showing clients their presentation options. With the evolution of digital imaging, the variety of product options is growing.

CALENDARS

We offer a twelve-month flip calendar and a poster-style calendar. Because calendar posters are usually prominently displayed, women will usually pick a dramatic but appropriately clothed image. Be hap-

py when one goes out your door, because the advertising and referral value is huge. The posters are large and dramatic, and they command attention.

CENTERFOLD POSTERS

What's in a name? Well, this one has a very sexy connotation—no wonder centerfold posters are our number-one seller for Valentine's Day gifts. Relatively inexpensive and a real attention getter, we usually print these as a 10x20-inch photographic print, which is very close to the size of a *Playboy*, *Maxim*, or *FHM* centerfold—something the guys who receive these images will be familiar with!

LEFT—Barbie wanted something sexy for her boyfriend, a big baseball fan. We made the image at a local ballpark half hour before sunset. A poster was the perfect presentation. She gave it to him at the start of training camp in March. **BELOW**—Amanda is a biker, and this poster-style calendar was perfect for display in a vintage Harley shop. Amanda made two calendars: one was hers, and one was for her dad. It's his bike she's posing with.





Fall Creek
 portrait design
 photography by Chris Adams



Winter Spencer 2012



Fall Creek
 portrait design
 photography by Chris Adams

Winter is a fitness model and dancer. She wanted to reward herself for all the training that helped create her terrific figure. She loved most of the images, and the album was the best way to give her all of them. This is the cover from her 8.5x11-inch coffee-table album.

SESSION BOOKS

A session book contains all the unique images from the shoot. When they're affordable, they're an easy sell. We offer two book styles: photographic and printed. The former has fixed mats and features one image per side (two per spread); the latter are produced on a digital offset press and come in horizontal or vertical formats and in various sizes. My favorite has a glossy cover.

DESIGNER ALBUMS

Designer albums are the most complex presentation offered at my studio. These albums have leather covers and feature flush-mounted pages that



Here is one of Winter's favorite album pages. We made these images at a waterfall using mid-afternoon daylight, a large reflector, and a portable strobe.

IT'S A SUCCESS

A glamour session is successful when you create a portrait that the subject loves and present it in a format that the client wants to take home.

showcase some of our best work, enhanced using Photoshop, Painter, and other graphic design programs.

Following the shoot, we review and select the images for the album and determine which shots will go on what pages. Next, I lay out the album. The client is then presented with a proof of her layout on CD. After her approval, we print the pages and have the album bound.

BEFORE THE SHOOT

STUDIO ATMOSPHERE

Studio atmosphere goes a long way toward making a client comfortable. It doesn't matter what style you choose, so long as it has a rich, comfortable, and consistent look. If it looks expensive, of

course, your clients might expect to spend a little more money on your services.

The dressing room should be your client's private space. The look and feel of the room is critical. My dressing rooms make the subject feel

LEFT AND BELOW—Sara Beth and Leissa did a glamour session together after we suggested it at Leissa's consultation. Be careful not to do exactly the same images for both women.



FRIENDS

Ask your subject to invite a female friend who will encourage and positively critique her. This will protect you from any hint of impropriety and may lead to a new client!





ABOVE—Shilo was photographed in the dressing room doorway. I like to use hot lights for portraits made here and have not corrected much for the tungsten cast. You often see this style of lighting in movies. **RIGHT**—For semi-nude or nude shots, keep a robe on hand to make your client comfortable. Here, Alisha used the full-length robe as a prop, then slipped back into it after we finished shooting.



pampered. Both have a stamped-tin ceiling and rich, warm, tasteful decor. The lights are tungsten, creating a warm glow in the images taken there.

TOUCHING THE SUBJECT

Some photographers advise you never to touch a nude or scantily clad subject. I wouldn't go that far; I think we're fairly sophisticated in the way we interpret a touch. Just be sure that you never touch a woman in a way she could potentially interpret as a sexual advance. Ask if it's okay to adjust her hair, for example.

CONVERSATION

Due to the nature of the session, you need to be judicious about what you say. It's best to err on the side of caution. Some conversations, especially when your client brings a girlfriend along, can get racy. Again, everyone is different. One person will take offense at a comment that another finds funny.

Try to discern the subject's comfort level at the consultation. It's one reason, in my mind, why a consultation is critical.

HAIR AND MAKEUP

Hair and makeup can make or break your session. Some women are proficient in doing their own; others will bring friends to help. If your studio offers hairstyling/professional makeup services, you'll make your clients feel even more pampered.

Both of my dressing rooms are stocked with foundation, lipstick (in a wide variety of colors), eyeshadow, eyeliner, and mascara. Many women will prefer to use their own products, but it's there if they need it. We also stock lotion and hairspray. My assistant, Ashley, does a great job of helping with hair and makeup as needed.

I also have developed relationships with several hairstylists and makeup artists to whom I often refer clients. (It's easy for a client to stop by a salon on her way to the photo session.) Getting to know these stylists has really educated me, particularly on the use of makeup, and the relationship benefits both of us because we refer clients to each other. A great way to win over a stylist or artist is to do

a free session for her and offer to hang a gorgeous portrait of her in her salon. Clients will undoubtedly ask her where the great portrait of her was made, and that just opens the door!

FACING PAGE, TOP—Barbie opted to stop by the salon for a style and makeover before her session.

FACING PAGE, BOTTOM—Denise's makeup is subtle, but it works perfectly with her outfit and this window light set. Notice the shading under her cheekbones and the greenish-blue hues of her eye makeup matches the colors of the peacock feathers she's posing with, the blue in her stockings, and the background. The same colors contrast nicely with the rich browns, all of which focus the attention on her.

BELOW—Winter did her own hair and makeup for this window light portrait. Notice that her eye makeup coordinates beautifully with her clothing choice.

GET EDUCATED

I rarely apply makeup myself, but I've learned enough about how it's done to direct my clients or assistants on how to get the look they want. There are a number of good books on the market that can be very helpful if you need to educate yourself. One of the best I've seen is *Making Faces* by Kevyn Aucoin (Little, Brown and Company, 1999). I keep a copy in the dressing room for my own reference. It breaks down the different looks and provides step-by-step instructions, so it's easy for subjects to follow, as well.





CLOTHING AND PROPS

For the most part, my clients wear their own clothes, not garments from the studio's collection. However, it does pay to keep a few things around to fill in the gaps.

- **Feather boas**—Feather boas are classic glamour props, and you should own at least a half dozen of them in different colors. Boas are also useful in strategically covering up problem areas or provocatively covering the subject's nudity.
- **Clothing**—I don't stock a lot of clothing because it's usually a very personal choice for the subject. There are a few things I keep on hand, though. A few years ago, my sister-in-law found some faux leather pants at a sidewalk sale. She showed them to me, and I bought four pairs in a range of sizes. We've used them a lot.

Fur coats have fallen out of favor, since animals have to be sacrificed. Still, they are pretty

sexy. In the past few years, I've found a number of inexpensive fur pieces at resale shops.

Also included in my wardrobe assortment are gauzy white and ivory cotton skirts with elastic waistbands, a floor-length black chiffon wrap, and an assortment of dressy women's hats—again from resale shops.

- **Shoes**—A few pairs of classically styled high heels in a variety of sizes come in handy. They are readily found at resale shops, too. If you're not sure what to buy, take along a female friend with good taste.

It's hard to find anything sexier than fur, even if it is not exactly politically correct. Because of that, you can often find fur pieces, like the one Morgan is posing with, pretty cheap at resale shops. We evoked Morgan's expression by asking her how the mink made her feel.



THE FABRIC SHOP

Fabric stores are great for photographers. Consider picking up lengths of fabrics in a wide variety of colors, textures, and patterns. You'll find it useful for creating unique backgrounds, and you can also use it as a drape when your subject wants to leave a little to the imagination.

RIGHT—Normally, I use the barbell for guys, but Tonya is a fitness competitor. To match her stage posing suit, the barbell was the perfect prop. The fire was created using a narrow black metal tray filled with lighter fluid, which burns for only a few seconds. **BOTTOM LEFT**—Monica is a singer who also plays rhythm guitar in a local rock band. She chose her clothing to support her sexy rock chick persona. **BOTTOM RIGHT**—We used sheer pink fabric to connect Brittany's string bikini and the pink background. Befriend your local fabric store staff. The fabric Brittany is posing with was a mill end on closeout.



FACE FIRST

Making your client look her best is a sincere form of flattery. And I always go by the “face first” rule: there’s nothing more important to her than her pretty face. To quote the late Dean Collins, “People, especially women, like two things: they like to hear their name and they like to see their faces looking thin.” Remember that—especially the last two words. And to make faces thin, remember two more words: short light (sometimes called narrow light).

A PERSONAL APPROACH

Never take a “one size fits all” approach to your lighting. You owe it to your subject to tailor your approach to make her appear as beautiful as possible. In return, she’ll reward you with sales.

Teaghan’s portrait is business sexy. We posed her face toward the camera and short lighted her. Remember, what is closest to the camera is prominent, while areas farther from the lens recede. From her questionnaire, we know she’s self-conscious about her hips. Had I posed her perpendicular to the camera, they would have appeared wider, and she wouldn’t have liked the image.





TOP—We photographed Jenni in a vacant warehouse, with lighting from an open window. A small reflector was used for fill and to light her eyes. **ABOVE**—Krystal's beautiful face is her best feature; a high camera angle makes it the first thing you notice. On her consultation questionnaire, she also rated her bustline highly, so why not give her both? **RIGHT**—We shot this portrait where Erin works as a bartender. Her work persona is sexy, and her open top and black bra get that message across. The shirttail covers part of her butt (from her questionnaire, we know she thinks it's too big). Bending her right leg and shifting her weight molded her body into a curvy S. A large window to her left produced short lighting (see next page) to slim her entire body.



LIGHTING FACES

When discussing lighting, we begin with the main light. Where this is positioned in relation to the subject will determine to a great degree the mood of the portrait and how your subject is represented.

SHORT LIGHTING

Short lighting is achieved by positioning your subject and lights so that the shadowed side of her face is closer to the camera than the highlight side.

BROAD LIGHTING

Broad light is the opposite of short light. It is achieved by posing and lighting your subject so the highlight side of her face is toward the cam-

era. Broad lighting can be quite beautiful. In fact, you'll see the approach used in a lot of old advertisements, particularly from 1900 to the 1940s. You need to be careful when using broad lighting on heavier subjects or those with rounder faces.

FASHION LIGHTING

Fashion lighting—a look that employs flat, front lighting from a large light source—is a variation on broad lighting. Once you hear that description, it's pretty easy to envision how you might do it.

Use fashion lighting when you want a magazine-style or Victoria's Secret look in your images—but be sure to have the subject's makeup well done. In the portrait world, we get a three-dimensional



LEFT—This black & white portrait of Jessica was lit with a large softbox about two feet above her eye level. Fashion light gives a flat, shadowless look, so we used makeup rather than lighting to define her eyes and lips. I overexposed her face by a stop to make her complexion appear flawless. **BELOW**—Since the main light is from overhead, the lighting on Stacy's face is split. The Mylar she was posed on provided fill light.





LEFT—Nicole’s face didn’t need slimming, so we used broad light. The lighting and her outfit created a retro feel. Broad light was popular in advertising images from 1890–1940. **RIGHT**—In Stephanie’s portrait, I used short lighting from head to toe. We covered a window with Styrofoam, into which I cut an oval hole to focus the early evening light. Her shadow side was turned toward the camera to slim her face and figure.

quality in our images by using light and shadow. In the fashion world, on the other hand, light and makeup create the sense of depth. Therefore, if your client wants this look, you should encourage her to use heavier (evening type) makeup. (*Note:* If your client has complexion problems, overexpose by a stop or so to blow out the imperfections.)

A simple variation on this look can be achieved using two small diffused lights to illuminate the subject from the front. One light should be placed a foot or two above eye level, and the other can be positioned a foot or two below it. For this type of lighting, I use a setup with two battery-operated, 60-watt halogen video lights. These are mounted on a 4-foot bar with a handle grip in the center so you can hold it with one hand and shoot with

the other (I had this made). The halogen light is a bit cool, but if you set your white balance to open shade, you won’t notice it.

SPLIT LIGHTING

A less common but dramatic style is split lighting—an approach in which half the face is lit and half is in shadow. I don’t use this technique often because it can look shadowy, sinister, and dark. In just the right glamour portrait, however, it can convey attitude. It can also help hide a facial flaw.

CATCHLIGHTS

When using a split-light approach, make sure that some light strikes the eye on the dark side of the subject’s face, creating a catchlight.

MORE FACIAL LIGHTING

LOOP LIGHTING

Loop lighting can be either short or broad. If you place your main light at a 45-degree angle to your subject and slightly above eye level, you'll create a shadow on the opposite side of her nose. If it's done correctly, the shadow will form a semicircle that extends down to about halfway between her nose and lip. This is my go-to lighting style.

BUTTERFLY LIGHTING

To create butterfly lighting, start with your main light in the loop-lighting position, then move it

higher and toward the center of the subject's face—almost on axis with her nose. This pattern gets its name from the narrow shadow that forms just beneath the subject's nose—a shadow that looks like a butterfly. Made popular by Hollywood photographers, this pattern can be striking because of the way it highlights facial features, emphasizing the eyes, cheekbones, and jawline, while deemphasizing the nose. (A lightbulb should have just lit up! This is one of the physical features many women don't like.) Moving your light slightly to the right or left will determine whether your butterfly lighting is short or broad.

REMBRANDT LIGHTING

If you started with your main light in the loop position and moved about 20 degrees away from the camera and a little higher, you'd have Rembrandt lighting. You can also create this pattern by starting with a split-lighting setup where you're looking at the shadow side of the face. Then, move the light toward the center until just a little light crosses the nose and creates a triangle on the opposite cheekbone. Other than that cheekbone and the jaw, the entire shadow side of the face will be quite dark.

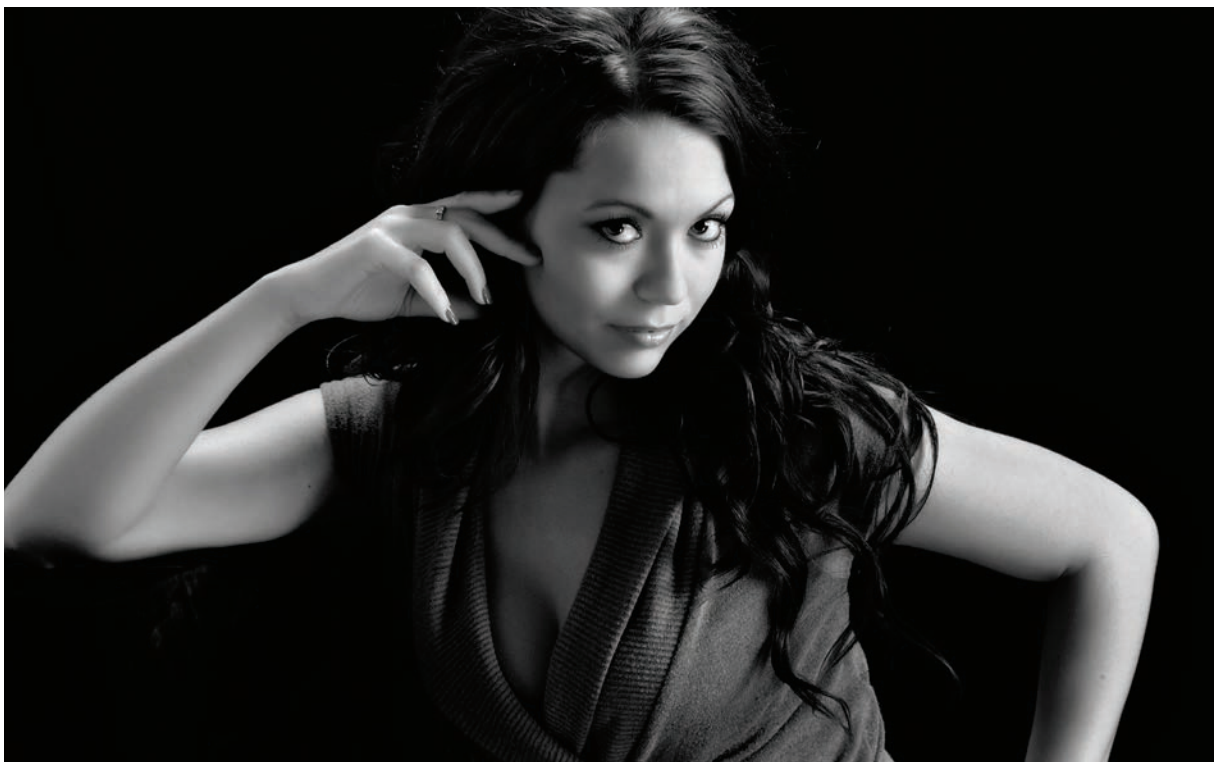
I love hot lights, and the Hollywood masters that used them favored the butterfly lighting pattern for their female subjects. The pattern gets its name from the butterfly-shaped shadow that appears under the nose. Place the light high above eye level and slightly to the right or left to create this pattern. You can also get this look outdoors when lighting your subject with the mid-day sun.



As the oval shadow under Stacy's nose on the shadow side of her face suggests, this portrait was made with loop lighting. I created this lighting pattern by feathering a large (20-inch) parabolic with barn doors across her face about 45 degrees to her left and slightly above eye level.



Rembrandt lighting is named for the Renaissance painter who preferred it. The main light is placed a little higher than for loop lighting and slightly more to the side so that the nose shadow extends almost to the lip. Note the tell-tale triangular highlight on Jenni's cheek. This pattern emphasizes the cheekbones and facial structure.



FACIAL ANGLES

There are only three correct angles at which to photograph a face: full, two-thirds, and profile.

FULL FACE

In magazine photography, we see lots of full-face presentations—but keep in mind that they’re working with perfect faces and flawless makeup.

You can create a full-face pose that is either basic or feminine. These variations used to be called masculine and feminine, but the industry has

moved away from that. While it’s true that you will rarely light a man in a feminine style, you often will light a woman’s face in a basic (“masculine”) style. In a basic presentation, the subject’s body and face are turned toward the main light. The head is then tipped toward the lower shoulder. The degree of the head tip varies. The subject’s body is turned away from the main light in the feminine pose, with the head turned back toward the light. The head is then tipped toward the high shoulder. Again, the degree of the head tip varies.



LEFT—This full-face image of Darcie is nearly split lit. Ask yourself, can you see both ears? If you can, it’s a full face. The subject’s shoulders should be at a 45 degree angle to the camera, turned toward the light for a basic pose, or away from the light for a more feminine style. Darcie turned away from the warehouse windows, making her pose feminine.

ABOVE—Only Bridgett’s left ear is visible, but we can see both eyes, making this a two-thirds portrait view. A two-thirds view is generally more slimming, especially with short lighting, than a full-face presentation. Be sure to pose your subject with her shoulders nearly square to the camera and her head turned right or left just so that you can see a little skin past the far eye. If you can’t see that patch of skin or her nose extends past her cheek line, she’s turned her head too far.

TWO-THIRDS

A two-thirds view appeals to many people because of its slimming effect. These poses can be created in both the basic and feminine styles.

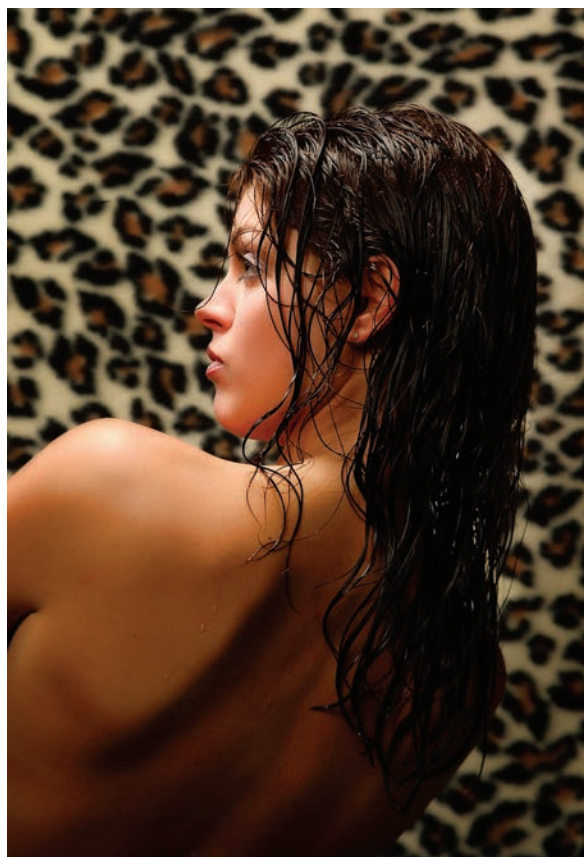
PROFILES

Profiles are a good variation, because they're not often seen in snapshots (and when they are, they are usually lit incorrectly, giving them a police line-up look). The main light should be placed at an angle of approximately 120 degrees from the camera, facing toward the subject. From the position of the subject's face, the light is at a 45 degree angle on the side opposite the camera. This means that it is actually angling back toward the camera, so shade your lens to prevent flare. Note that profiles can be done from the front or the back.

TOP—This reverse two-thirds view of Kelli shows her playful and coy side. When you opt for a reverse view, you will have to cheat on the shoulder angle and allow the subject to turn her shoulder slightly toward you so she can turn her neck far enough to look into the camera. **BOTTOM**—What's cool about a profile is that you can pose one from the front or the back. In this back profile of Shannon, we've positioned her shoulders at 45 degrees to the camera. I positioned the main light at about 45 degrees to her right, feathering the light across her face from behind. We didn't want deep shadows, so we added moderate fill.

REAR VIEW

A reverse view is less commonly seen than a front view, so making a portrait or two using this presentation can help set you apart from your competition. Be aware, though, that not every client will be flexible enough to strike a reverse two-thirds pose.



EMPHASIZING CURVES

Our goal is to make a woman look feminine, alluring, and sexy. To do this, we must create curves in the pose that emphasize or coax a classic hourglass shape for her upper body and join this shape to long, tapering legs.

DYNAMIC POSING

If you look at fashion magazines, you'll see that their models are almost never posed standing

straight up, with their shoulders square to the camera. Based on this observation, I've developed what I call the Rule of Twos. According to this rule, body parts that come in pairs shouldn't appear on the same optical plane. This applies to the breasts (they'll do what the shoulders do) and also to the arms, hands, hips, legs, feet, eyes, and ears.

THE C POSE

All poses start with the feet and, for the C pose, the subject's feet should be at about a 45 degree angle to the camera with her weight on the back foot. Her hip should be kicked out slightly, as if she were carrying a baby in her arms. With her weight on her back foot, her front foot will be free to swing in an arc a little less than 90 degrees. That foot can be placed in different positions along the arc depending on the look you want.

At this point, her shoulders will also be at an angle to the camera. This will make the far shoulder appear lower, because it recedes optically. You can have her relax and drop that shoulder and/or raise the near shoulder for emphasis. Having the subject tilt her head toward her high shoulder completes the classic C pose.

The C pose can be basic (body toward main light) or feminine (body away from main light). Have her place her weight on her back foot, then have her move her front foot in front of the instep of her back foot. Ask the model to bend her front knee slightly and tip it slightly inward. Tell her to roll her front forward onto her big toe. Have her lean her torso slightly toward the main light and tip the top of her head slightly in the same direction. The result will be a gentle C curve.





LEFT—I had Jacque lie down with her body in a straight line. We moved both feet slightly to her right. I had her bend her right knee up and tip it toward her left leg to enhance her curves. Next, I asked her to bend at the waist and pull her right shoulder and hip together. The final touch was to tip her head toward her right shoulder, resulting in a sexy C curve. This shot was taken from a ladder, but the pose looks great from other angles too. **RIGHT**—Women have curves, and as glamour photographers, we need to emphasize them. This image of Tonya shows the Rule of Twos at work. Study Tonya’s eyes, hands, shoulders, breasts, hips, and legs, and you’ll notice that all paired body parts appear on different optical planes. Have her bend her torso and arch her back, and she’ll look taller and slimmer, too.



REMEMBER THE RULE OF TWOS

If you look at fashion magazines, you’ll see that their models are almost never posed standing straight up, with their shoulders square to the camera. Based on this observation, I’ve developed what I call the Rule of Twos. According to this rule, body parts that come in pairs shouldn’t appear on the same optical plane. This applies to the breasts (they’ll do what the shoulders do) and also to the arms, hands, hips, legs, feet, eyes, and ears.

THE S POSE

The S pose is all about accentuating a woman's curves. Her weight is on her back leg, but her front foot is placed almost directly in front of the back foot. This forms the bottom portion of the hourglass shape, narrowing the appearance of the calves and accenting the curve of the hips. The subject's back is then arched and her front shoulder is pulled down. The combination of back, hip, and shoulder movement slims the waist, while the shoulders complete the hourglass shape. The head is tipped toward her high shoulder, completing the

S shape. This head tip generally projects some attitude as well. Both the C and the S pose can be either short or broad lit.

TIGHTEN IT UP

Instruct your subjects to keep their backs tight. This will, as photographer Robert Lino says, "put the Dollies and the J-Lo in the right place."

LEFT—Jenni's version of the S pose was created using a slightly different approach in the placement of her feet than was used in the portrait of Bridgett on the facing page. Starting with her weight on her back (left) foot, she placed her right foot in front. Next, she dropped her far (left) shoulder down and tipped her head toward the same shoulder. The result is again an S. **RIGHT**—In this calendar shot of Teresa, you can clearly see the S shape by drawing an imaginary line from her left foot, to her right hip, to the top of her head.



TOP—The S pose shows off a woman's curves more than any other. In this high-key image of Bridgett, we started the pose with her feet; we had her spread them out so that they were positioned a little wider than her shoulders, with her left foot pointed toward the main light. We had her shift her weight to her right leg and hip. Next, we asked her to drop her right shoulder, raise her left one, and turn her face to the main light, while keeping the top of her head tipped slightly toward her right shoulder. The result was a dramatic, curvy S pose. **BOTTOM**—This portrait of Alisha proves that the S shape, like the C shape, can be achieved in a reclining pose. Start with the subject lying on her side, facing the camera. Next, have her bend her lower knee, roll her top hip over the lower one, and relax and stretch out her top leg. If you're shooting from a low perspective, make sure her body is at a 45 degree angle to the camera, with her face closest to the lens. If you're shooting from a high angle, have her turn her torso down toward the floor. Her arms can be extended straight, or she can rest on her elbows and cup her chin in her hands.



A SLIM TUMMY AND WAIST



You're looking at three of Lindsay's assets: her face, blond hair, and great cleavage. You probably don't even think about her stomach, but her slightly out of focus tush belongs there and her shapely legs take your eyes out of the picture. You liked what's visible and didn't think about what you don't see. More than likely your client will too.

When you review your client's questionnaires, you'll notice that the same body parts are identified as problem spots over and over again. Here are some techniques for helping your subjects look their best.

The stomach and waist are commonly perceived as a problem area for our clients. Fortunately, we have a handful of great approaches at our disposal for ensuring the perceived flaw is minimized.

CREATE AN ILLUSION

No one is going to wrap a tape measure around the subject's waist. We just need to make her look nicely proportioned. To do this, have your subject stand with her body 45 degrees to the camera, then ask her to turn her shoulders toward the camera. This makes her shoulders appear wider than her waist. If her hips aren't wide (or she doesn't think they are), have her turn her hips slightly toward the camera. This gives her a beautiful hourglass figure, with her waist as the thinnest spot. Also, stretch her torso—who doesn't love a long-waisted woman? If her waist appears a little thick, stretch it out by leaning her toward the camera. This optically increases the distance between her shoulders and hips, giving her a slimmer appearance.

SHORT AND SWEET

Some vertically challenged women see themselves as a bit thick in the hips and thighs. To optically lengthen the legs and torso, consider shooting from belly-button level. Have her turn her hips away from the camera to visually narrow the expanse of the hips.

You can also use light and shadow to blur the line of her tummy or waistline.

CONCEAL THE AREA

You can cover up a thin waistline or tummy bulge with body positioning, clothing, or another body part. If your client is going to lie down, have her lie on her stomach. Add a little lacy fabric and you've obscured the line of her stomach, leaving the viewer's imagination to fill in the blanks. Imagination is forgiving and kind.

You may be able to obscure the area by carefully posing another body part. If your client is standing, you can bring her arms in to break the outline of her torso. If she's seated, you can use a thigh and knee in front of her stomach to break its line.

Finally, you can use a piece of clothing to obscure the shape of her torso—just make sure it isn't obvious that's what you're doing.

CREATE A DISTRACTION

What does your subject see as her best attributes? Feature them in the image, and you'll draw the viewer's gaze away from the perceived problem area.

LEFT—Where's Brianna's waistline? You were probably looking at her face, another cute body part, the hot rod, or all three—that's the power of distraction. Also, wearing the black bustier allowed her tummy to fall into shadow. **RIGHT**—Darla's tummy isn't model-thin, but who notices? Bringing her left leg and knee up hides her stomach. Wearing black also helps her tummy fall into shadow.



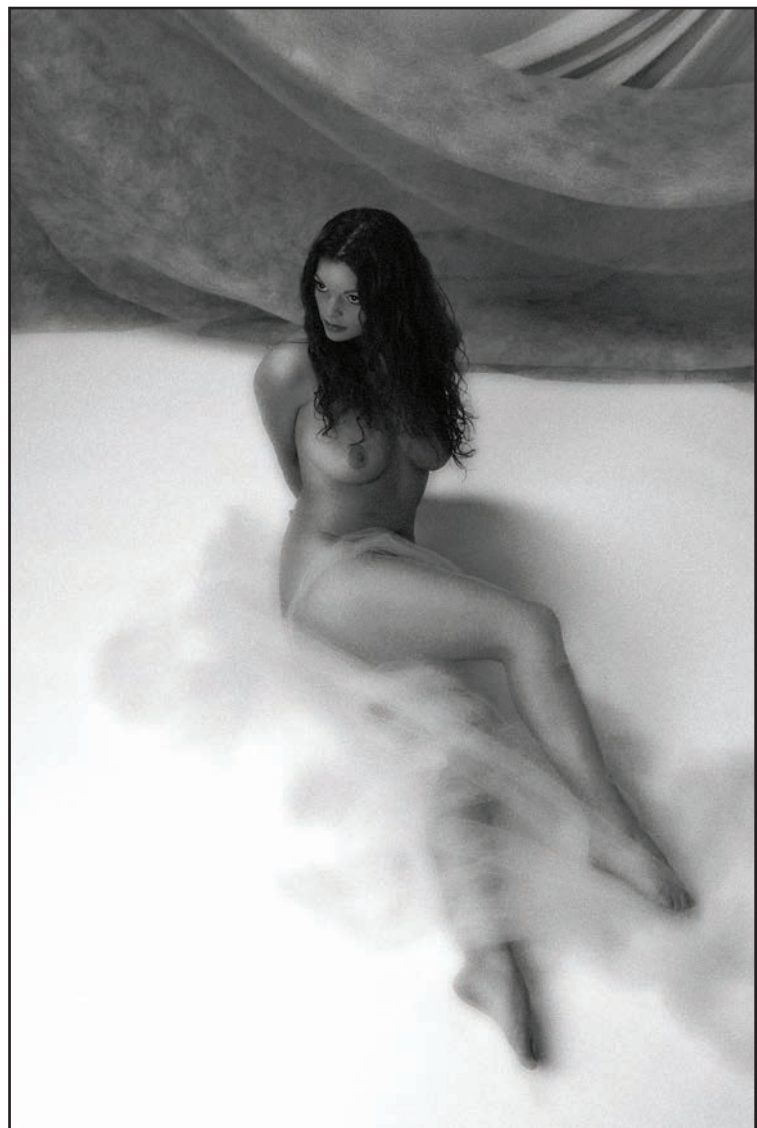
LONG, SLIM LEGS

Legs and thighs too heavy? With the body at a 45 degree angle to the camera and the shoulder turned a bit back toward the camera, have your client take a small step toward you with her front foot. Then, point that foot at you and bring its heel in line with the instep of her back foot. You've now covered up at least half her back leg, optically slimming the legs and completing the hourglass shape.

A LONG STORY

To visually slim your subject's legs, make them longer. Have her wear heels and take a lower camera angle. The correct camera height for a full-length portrait is about belly-button level.

LEFT—I aimed my lens at about mid-thigh to exaggerate Meghan's long legs. **RIGHT**—Tarina's pointed toes added a touch of grace to the overall pose—and another 6 inches to the length of her legs!





TOP LEFT—Alisha is a full-figured girl who wanted her legs and hips to look slim. I had her place one foot in front of the instep of the other to obscure a good part of her back thigh. I asked her to place her weight on her back foot and tip her knee slightly inward to taper the front thigh and complete the hourglass shape. **TOP RIGHT**—Jackie's pose is an exaggerated S. Her knee-length boots lengthened her lower legs, and the bend and tip of her right leg shaped her thighs, completing the S shape. The tortoise was a prop for a reptile calendar. **ABOVE**—We kept Bridget's legs looking shapely by throwing one leg over the other. Turning her shoulders the opposite way further slimmed her waist and hips. The overhead camera angle also lengthened her body.

ENHANCING THE BREASTS

Large breasts sometimes sag. Brenda (below) was concerned about this. Often, photographing a subject in a bra (thank you, Victoria's Secret) will help, but sometimes you'll want a topless image. In this case, having her lift her arms above her head can do the trick.

Some women are self-conscious about their small breasts. This can be addressed in two ways. First, you can divert the viewer's attention to some other part of the subject's body. For instance, you can focus on the beautiful S-shaped lines you cre-

ate with her pose. You can also add something to her surroundings—perhaps employing some water that is sensually splashing over her body or some other attention-getting tactic or prop.

Second, you can have your subject support her breasts by crossing her arms over them. This gives the impression that she is coyly covering her breasts. At the same time, though, her arms act much as a push-up bra. To finish, position the subject so the light is crossing her body, creating a shadow in her cleavage.

SHADOWY FIGURE

Add a little makeup to slightly darken the shadow in the cleavage to optically increase the size of the breasts.

BELOW—Large breasts sometimes sag. For this shot, Brenda raised her arms above her head to naturally lift her breasts. **FACING PAGE**—In this pose, Shantel used her hands to boost her bustline, much like a push-up bra. The open top is a tease and draws more attention to her breasts. Her coy expression does the rest.

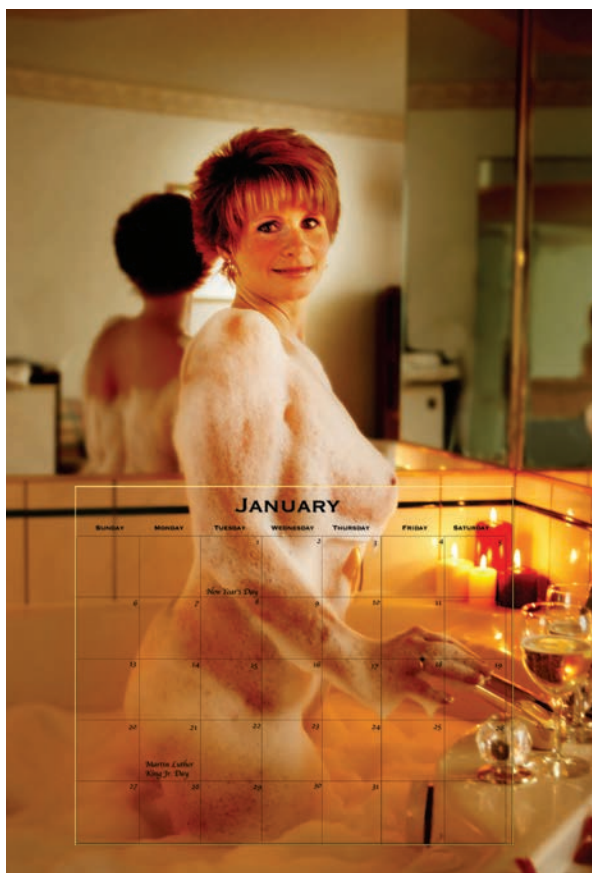




CORRECTIVE POSING TIPS

Clients are happy when you can downplay or distract the viewer from any perceived flaws. Before you begin shooting, ask yourself “What do I want to show? What don’t I?” Use the answers to these questions to make her look gorgeous. Here are a few guidelines:

- If you want to diminish it, light it directly.
- If you want to accentuate it, light across it and create shadows.
- Call attention to a positive feature. Make it dramatic enough that the viewer doesn’t notice the “problem.”
- Create illusions. Use body parts, clothing, or props to break up unattractive lines. When the eye sees an incomplete line, the imagination fills it in. Imagination is much more forgiving than reality.
- There is no substitute for a beautiful, expressive face. There are angles that flatter. Find them.
- Learn to create body language. This usually means bending and twisting that is exaggerated beyond what your client would do in everyday life. The less space your subject occupies in the image, the more exaggerated the pose needs to be. The exception would be a head shot, where a glance back across the nose is very dramatic.
- Make sure the body language and facial expression are harmonious.
- For women, body parts in pairs should be posed posed on different optical planes. This creates curves.
- Use different camera angles. Low angles lengthen legs and torsos. High ones accentuate the face and foreshorten the body.



LEFT—Rita thought a bubble bath image would be fun and sexy. In this calendar image, we used the bubbles to hide her tummy line. **FACING PAGE**—The most important principle in the corrective posing mind-set is the Rule of Twos. Here, we made sure to have Brianna pose every limb, as well as her shoulders, breasts, and hips, on a different visual plane. *Note:* Have your subject bend her torso and arch her back, too—she’ll look taller and slimmer. Most models will love the effect!

GET IT IN-CAMERA

It’s always your best bet to create a strong, figure-flattering pose to conceal flaws and draw attention to the subject’s best attributes. You should only turn to digital enhancements when you’ve done your due diligence but need a bit more help.



BLACK BACKGROUNDS

For complete focus on the subject, it's hard to beat no background at all. I use black quite a bit, and the secret to getting it truly black (not muddy black) is to keep light off of it. Black seamless paper works well, but it's still a little bit reflective, so you have to be careful about stray light. Black felt is great at absorbing stray light, as is velour. Many background companies offer a light-absorbing black material as well.

When working with a black backdrop, you'll want to consider skipping the fill light. After all, you're going for a contrasty look here.



INTO THE FOG

For a variation on the simple black background, add some fog from a fog machine. Then, put a little light into the smoke to make it show up.



LEFT—The key to a true black background is to keep stray light off of it. Here, I lit Winter without a fill light and feathered the main light in front of her, giving the image an edgy 4:1 lighting ratio. **FACING PAGE**—The black background makes Lindsay's skin and blond hair pop. Keeping your subject away from the background helps keep stray light off the background material. My favorite materials for a black background are seamless paper, velour or felt. I paint the floor black for full-length images.



WHITE BACKGROUNDS

White seamless paper is as versatile as black. To get that clean white look, the background needs to be slightly overexposed—about 1½ to 2 stops over the main light falling on the subject.

You can get another look from a white background when you add Mylar. I love using this stuff; it's like adding an extra-large softbox, but you get a highly specular light quality.

Rolls of Mylar can be purchased from a gardening supply center or packaging businesses. It is actually designed for use in hydroponic gardening and gift wrapping. Mylar is available in a wide vari-

ety of colors, but I prefer the silver variety because the other colors can produce an undesirable color cast in the skin tones.

NIX THE FUN-HOUSE EFFECT

Sure, Mylar is highly reflective, but you don't want to use it for reflection images. It distorts the reflection, giving you a circus fun-house effect.

Gwen's clothing choice made white on white a natural choice. We used the fuzzy white rug (it's a bath mat, actually) to give the image a little texture.





TOP LEFT—Nothing in this shot competes with Barbie. A high-key background isolates your subject and is one of the primary ingredients in creating a Vargas-style pin-up image. Ensure the background is 1½ to 2 stops brighter than your subject for a clean-white look. **TOP RIGHT**—Notice the soft glow of Brittany’s skin. Using Mylar as a floor covering will give you that look in-camera. **BOTTOM**—We have winter in Wisconsin, so the hat, scarf, and mitten set was a great accessory option for this shot of Erin. We used white tulle to give the image a snow-like texture and overexposed it with an overhead strip light.



GELS AND SECONDARY BACKGROUNDS

My studio isn't large enough for permanent sets. In most cases, backgrounds and sets need to be assembled on the fly during a session. You've heard of flow posing—the act of starting with a basic pose and making small changes, one after the other, to easily produce a wide variety of looks, almost effortlessly. Well, you can use the same concept when it comes to building background looks, starting with a white or black background like those used in the previous sections.

FROM A WHITE BASE

Once you've created a series of images of your subject in front of a white background, drape a white, off-white, or light-colored cloth in front of it. Add simple props—maybe a chair, bench, or decorations. Take a few shots of the model with this set, most likely a full-length, three-quarters, head-and-shoulders pose, and a head shot. Next, place a light or two between the background and draping, then gel the lights to match or complement your sub-

Here, we started with white seamless, then draped white chiffon fabric behind and around Lindsay. She was posed on a mirror, which served as a secondary light source. As she was close to the background, some orange light from the background light spilled on her. This intensified the color of her outfit.



FACING PAGE—Allie's nickname has always been Alleycat, so we painted her in tabby stripes. I gelled the lights on the black seamless paper with orange and purple, then turned them toward the fog from a fog machine that was hidden behind her. We framed her with pampas grass for a wild factor.

ject's clothing or props. Finally, rearrange the set elements or add a new prop or two and take the same series of images.

By moving from a white background, to a draped backdrop, to the gelled backdrop, you'll create three unique sets, and if you vary your lighting in each one, you'll achieve a wonderfully varied look that will help boost sales.

FROM A BLACK BASE

You can do the same thing with a black background. If you experiment, you'll find your own favorite variations. A couple of mine are to gel my lights to add color to the black. To do this, you'll need more power from your lights. With this approach, seamless works better than felt or velour. With the right power and seamless paper, you'll get rich, deep color. I like to use a fog machine to add smoke to produce texture in the image. If you aim your lights into the smoke, it will pick up the color from your gels.

ABOUT GELS

You can buy sheets of gel material in a wide array of colors. I get mine at a local music store that sells them to local bands and theater groups.

By using barn doors on your background lights, you can keep the color from spilling onto your subject.



SHE'S RED-HOT

What color is a fire truck? A stop sign? What color car do police stop most often? The answer to these questions is red. Why? Red attracts attention; it catches our eye. Red is powerful, passionate, and intense. It ignites our senses.

Of course, sexy women command attention. If you attire or surround that beautiful woman in red, you'll have a real attention-getter. Red is definitely the color of choice when you want to create a provocative portrait.

If your subject is shy about using an all-out red backdrop, try a few splashes of red—be it on her lips, clothing, or an element on the set. Red is a warm color that advances in the image frame, drawing the viewer's gaze. Try a touch of red—chances are your subject and the recipient will be glad you did.

AMERICAN BEAUTY

In *American Beauty*, one of the stars fantasizes about a younger woman lying nude and strewn with rose petals. After the film's release, many women came to my studio to request a similar image. One thing is clear: men and women both respond to the passion incited by the color red.

Red looks fabulous on Latinas like Ilicia; it complements olive skin and dark brown hair. Here, a length of red satin fabric and a pair of stappy black heels make for a provocative pairing.





TOP LEFT—Here's another image of Ilicia that proves that red can amplify the attention-getting qualities of a stunning subject. **TOP RIGHT**—Red attracts and commands attention. Roxanne does, too. Combining the two makes a portrait in the provocative style. We added the flames in the foreground to complement the extinguisher and fireman's hat. **BOTTOM**—This red set augments Angel's red lingerie. The background was actually a rusty color, but I used a red gel to augment it and created color harmony in the set. We wanted the image to ooze with sex appeal, and all that was left was to pose Angel and get the right expression.



MIRRORS

Reflections can be really cool—we can get two views of the face and sometimes the body in one image. Bear in mind a critical lesson from Photography 101 when creating these portraits: the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection. Also, when shooting on a mirror, make sure the mirror is rigid or is placed on a hard, flat surface; otherwise, the reflection will be distorted.

In my studio, I use two Plexiglas mirrors: a standard mirror with a silver backing and a black Plexiglas mirror. I also use a standard (glass) oval mirror, about 60 inches tall, that was originally part of a vanity.

Using Plexiglas mirrors works best for reclining poses, as my subject can lie upon one with no worries about breaking glass. When I use the antique mirror, I seldom lie a client on it.

The standard mirror will reflect your lighting virtually 1:1 if you keep your lighting angle and camera angle about equal. I find 30 to 45 degrees ideal. With black Plexiglas, a shallower angle, say

GETTING THE GOODS

For maximum versatility, purchase a 60- to 72-inch square mirror from a glass dealer in both standard and black. You'll need the length for creating three-quarter or full-length images, and the width will allow you to accommodate the reflections.

15 to 30 degrees, works best. You'll need more light to get a detailed reflection. Don't go so far as to overexpose your subject, though.

The reflection you'll get will be about $\frac{1}{3}$ as bright as the original image, but the color and detail of your reflection will be rich and deep.

With a mirrored setup, modify your lights as necessary. Your mirrors, of course, will reflect the quality of light produced by each modified source.



The reflection gives us two views of Tarina—a two-thirds actual view and a reflected profile view. When using this approach, pose your subject at the far edge of the mirror to allow space for the reflected image.

Winter's watery reflection was created using a large sheet of Mylar. Lighting for the image included a large, 6-foot softbox and mirrors, which reflected the main light, providing either a secondary main or a fill.



We created this striking reflection image of Brooke using a sheet of black Plexiglas. Brooke is a singer who has a Gothic stage persona, so the black and the chains suited her stage character. We used two strip lights, both overhead, one toward the camera angled down toward Brooke and the other above and angled from behind. We made sure the lights were feathered so we didn't create any hot spots.



WINDOW LIGHT

Using window light will allow you to create some of the most beautiful images imaginable. The good news is, it's remarkably easy to work with—just keep your reflectors handy. With window light, what you see is what you get. It can be frustrating if you're not used to it, because it doesn't move. Therefore, you must move your subject to get the desired angles.

Directional light creates the highlights and shadows we need to produce a three-dimensional impression in a two-dimensional image. By their nature, windows allow directional light to fall on

A DISTINCTIVE LOOK FOR BIGGER PROFITS

As glamour photographers, we want to create images with a distinctive style. We also want to present our clients with as many different looks as possible. Using window light is just one way to achieve that goal. The good news is, it's always at our disposal, free of charge.



your subject. The window's frame confines the spread of light, and curtained windows can soften it, resulting in a beautiful, flattering source and gentle falloff.

As a default method, use the light to cross your subject, placing her body at a 45 degree angle to the light (she can be turned away or toward it), then have her turn her face into the light.

Another cool variation is to front light your subject using a window or doorway to focus the light. When shooting, your back will be toward the light. A good example of this approach would be

This is one of my favorite portraits of Dawn. The main light came from a row of old windows in the warehouse. Her placement allowed the same light to also create separation. I turned her body away from the windows, allowing the shadows to bring out the definition in her curves and fantastic abs. A portable strobe shot through a diffuser served as the fill light.



ABOVE—Two reflectors were used as the main light on Savanna. A large reflector behind the camera bounced sunlight coming through the window, and a small, concave reflector, slightly to the right and below (just out of the frame), focused the light on her face. **RIGHT**—In this pin-up portrait of Brianna, we used the light coming in the window as our main light, turning her face toward it. A large reflector placed at camera left, just out of the frame, provided fill. A medium round reflector on a stand was placed higher at the left and slightly behind her; it provided separation light.

shooting in an open doorway; for example, I like to work in the loading docks of an old warehouse. I joke with my subjects about “loading dock light,” but its effects can be very beautiful, and you’ll find it minimizes the need for retouching and enhancing the eyes.



THE WET LOOK



LEFT—The original Calvin Klein ads were black & white, and I prefer to shoot the wet look that way. In Whitney’s portrait, we misted her hair with a spray bottle and instructed her to mess it up. I often use a secondary main light—here, a small strip box—from below to avoid heavy shadows from the subject’s hair. I added a strip light above and slightly behind Whitney to create separation. **RIGHT**—The main light in Winter’s image was the sun. When your subject is turned toward the sun, have her close her eyes for a sensual look.

Made popular by Calvin Klein advertising in the early- to mid-’90s, the wet look is on its way to becoming a classic style due to its impact. Personally, I think the wet-look images are some of my most compelling shots.

This style of image works best for subjects with curly hair. The best results are achieved with sub-

jects who have thick hair, as thin hair doesn’t seem to look as appealing when it’s wet. Because water destroys any hairstyle a client comes in with, you need to do this type of image exclusively or reserve it for the end of a session. I lean toward black & white for this style, although I’ve found it can work in color as well.



TOP—I like to combine high-contrast black & white with the wet look, as I did for this image of Christi.

BOTTOM—Lauren wouldn't have looked nearly as sexy with dry hair. While the lighting looks completely natural, Lauren was posed in the shade under a rocky overhang, and the main light was a portable strobe placed above her on the rocks. Reflected light off the water served as fill.

EXERCISE YOUR OPTIONS

As these images show, the wet look works indoors and out, with subjects in all sorts of attire (or none at all). When shooting high-contrast black & white images (my favorite!), encourage the subject to apply heavier/darker makeup to ensure her features do not appear washed out.



HOT LIGHTS

Hot lights are retro, a throwback, yet their warm and specular quality will give you a look that not every photographer can produce, and that's what we're all looking for, right? This is an overview of how I use them, but it's not the only way.

I call the lighting style “coppertone” because I only partly compensate for the warm cast of tungsten light. To create the look, set your camera's white balance to 5200K or select the sunny white balance preset. This will get you close, and you can tweak the color in Photoshop or Lightroom.

The equipment I use is relatively simple. You could start with just the modeling lights on your strobes. The modifiers you'll find most useful are the stock parabolic reflectors used with honeycomb grids (rated 5 to 40 degrees); they will form a soft, pleasing spot of light. A larger parabolic (beauty dish) with barn doors will also come in handy.

I bought my Photogenic mini-spots because I wanted to view my competition prints under the same light the judges use. However, I've found they come in handy for producing the coppertone look, too. You'll need at least two of these units.

LEFT—You won't find players like Tracy at the ballpark. She was painted with this sexy two-piece uniform, and we used coppertone lighting to give the image a dugout feeling. Two lights were used: an antique street light from above created the oval spot, and a parabolic with a narrow snoot lit her face. **RIGHT**—The hunting cabin theme Courtney wanted called for the warm look of hot lights. I used a parabolic with a 20 degree grid to light her face and another parabolic with vertical barn doors to light her body. We angled that light to put shadows in the right places to avoid graphic nudity.





We wanted to create a Hollywood retro look in this portrait of Jaimie. Four lights were used to create the image: a Fresnel with a snoot lit her face, another with barn doors created a light strip for her legs, a large parabolic behind the camera provided fill, and another parabolic on the background created separation.

They have a Fresnel lens, which also creates a soft spot with a really pleasing specular, and they're focusable. You can buy modifiers for them, too. The snoots and barn doors are the most useful because they really let you sculpt the light.

I also bought several old theater cans, which also have Fresnel lenses. I use the 8-inch and 12-inch type most often. The 8-inch one came with barn doors, but I had to cobble a pair for the 12-inch light.

Finally, I use battery-powered video lights as well. My favorite product is called a Lowel-light. The light is focusable, and I'd recommend getting the barn doors for it as well. (Truthfully, I get a kick out of making my own modifiers for my hot lights.)

Once you've got your lights, start with a three-light setup—a main, fill, and separation. You may need other lights for backgrounds and props as well (with the modifiers I use, the spread of light is very narrow. I love it because it gives me a lot of control and a really distinct look). You may not need your light meter as much, as the lights are always on and you can easily see your light ratios. With hot lights, it's easy to see when something needs more light, and you can simply add it without much fuss.

SHEER GENIUS

If you're going to get into hot lighting, I'd recommend studying some of the work by the classic photographers of the 1920s to 1960s. I'd start with Hollywood photographer George Hurrell.

FLASH OUTDOORS

There are some backgrounds or sets that you just can't duplicate in the studio, so you and your client will have to go on location. Working on location can be a great creative experience, but there are some challenges. We'll look at the basics, then move on to consider some specific examples.

On location, my lighting setups tend to be simpler. I try to use the natural lighting present. After all, the existing light is part of the ambiance, part of why you chose the location in the first place.

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Besides my camera, my main location tools are a portable strobe and a couple of reflectors (these are sometimes used as gobos). I never use on-camera flash; it's flat and produces a snapshot look.

My preferred flash units are the Vivitar 285 and Metz 45, both of which I mount on a Redhawk stand that opens automatically when you set it down on a hard surface. They're relics of the '70s and '80s, but since I use them on manual mode, I don't need advanced electronics. They're also cheap, so when I lose one, it's not a catastrophe—and losing them is an occupational hazard because I use them near waterfalls, rivers, bridges, construction sites, etc.

This setup allows me to add light where I need it. To trigger it, I use a radio slave. There are many good ones available, but I like the Quantum 4i. Like the flash units, they're older, yet reliable. The slaves are basically an on/off switch, so I don't need sixty-four frequencies; sixteen will do.

This shot of Shantel was made in an alley at the tire factory in winter. The light from the cloudy sky was ideal, but I had to eliminate the shadow from her hood. To do this, I placed a portable flash about 45 degrees to her left and set it to equal the ambient light. This gave me a natural-looking main light and a 2:1 ratio.





ABOVE—The sun had dropped below the gorge’s rim when we took this shot of Brittany. For a sunny look, we placed a portable flash to her left and set it one stop above the ambient light for a 3:1 ratio. The light reflecting off the water added fill. **RIGHT**—This photo of Shantel was made in the tire factory alley, late in the afternoon. I used the sun as a hair/separation light. A portable strobe set one stop under the sun was the main light. Without the flash, her face would have been in deep shadow.

THE FLASH AS A MAIN LIGHT

When the sun is shining brightly, most photographers head for the shade. I don’t. I just add my flash and use the sunlight as a separation light. To do this, I turn the subject’s back to the sun. This makes her hair look great, separates her from the background, and keeps her from squinting. The sun need not be directly behind her (that can result in lens flare); have it coming in from the side. Then, place your flash on the same side so the main light, though it is flash, looks very natural. The ambient (shade) light in the scene will serve as fill.



FLASH SETTINGS

To determine your flash setting, begin with the Sunny 16 Rule. According to this rule, you should set your aperture to $f/16$, then select the shutter speed that is the closest inverse of the ISO. For example, at ISO 100, the closest shutter speed would be $1/125$ second; at ISO 200, it would be $1/250$ second, and so on.

So, let's start by setting the ISO at 100. Based on the Sunny 16 Rule, with our subject posed so that her back is to the sun, we know the separation light will be $f/16$ at $1/125$ second. I prefer, how-

ever, to use a wider aperture and the highest shutter speed I have available, usually $1/250$ second. This gives me $f/11$ at $1/250$ second.

Now, back to Photography 101. In this situation, your ambient (shade) light level will typically be about 2 stops less— $f/5.6$ at $1/250$ second. You will want your flash (main light) to be about a stop higher to produce a highlight and to create the correct lighting pattern on the subject's face and body. If you're looking for a softer highlight (about a 2:1 ratio), you'll want to get an $f/5.6$ out of your flash; that will give you an $f/8$ highlight. If you're looking for a more contrasty look with specular highlights and deeper shadows, set your flash to get an $f/8$ output— $f/8$ plus $f/5.6$ equals $f/11$.

When you first get started, you'll probably need to take a few meter readings, but after a while, you'll have done this often enough to know that at 6 to 10 feet away from the subject, your flash will give you $f/5.6$ at $1/16$ power. If you need to place it 15 feet away (you don't want it in the picture, after all), set it at $1/2$ power.

We made this image of Amanda on a cloudy afternoon, but we wanted it to look like it was shot at sunset. I had my assistant stand in the water to Amanda's left and with a portable strobe set to $2/3$ stop over the daylight level. The flash was warmed up with an amber gel, which reduced the flash output $1/3$ stop. To deepen the shadows, I increased the shutter speed by 2 stops (from $1/60$ to $1/250$). The result was the sunset look we were after!





FLASH POSITION

There are no modeling lights on portable flashes, so you have to approximate the placement and check your LCD to see if you have the right light pattern. Experience is the best teacher, but to obtain the default loop pattern, place the flash at about a 45 degree angle to your subject's face and about a foot above eye level.

ABOVE—We posed Brittany on the white hood of her boyfriend's truck. We needed her body to pop, so we placed a flash just beyond the left side of the image frame and feathered the light across her face and body. I set a portable flash about a stop above the late-afternoon light and, to enhance the effect, I bumped up the shutter speed, underexposing the ambient light by a stop. **RIGHT**—Daisy Duke! We posed Jenny at this abandoned farm with the sun at her back (note the highlights on her hat). We brought in a flash covered with a parachute-fabric "sock" to her left and at eye level to get under the brim of her hat. I set the flash equal to the intensity of the sunlight to provide even lighting on her face and torso.



MAN-MADE LOCATIONS

There are looks you just can't get in the studio. I find it exciting to work in new locations and adapt to the conditions that new locations present me with. I offer my clients the option to shoot in a number of man-made locations, and they love it. Here are a few of our favorites:

- Railroad yard—Boxcars painted with graffiti, old freight depots, and retro passenger coaches are some of the props available here.
- Tire factory—A quintessential rust-belt industrial complex built between 1910 and 1940, this location features lots of old brick buildings, loading docks that have surprisingly beautiful light, and an alley with buildings, smokestacks, chemical tanks, and catwalks.
- Junkyard—Its owner is an old hippie who sells parts to collectors and hot-rodders. Cars and trucks from the 1930s to the 1970s line its partly wooded, rolling hills.
- Keller Park—This location has an old millpond, as well as a creek with a sandstone gorge below its dam. It's got a small-town ballpark and an old railroad bridge that spans the pond. All of these features can make for priceless backdrops.
- Warehouse—The warehouse in Eau Claire's old north side was built in the 1930s and combines industrial grit with really beautiful window light

Janelle is a pool player, and she and her husband own this pool hall. We made this image to surprise him and only had to sneak in before the hall opened to make it. We used two lights here, the overhead table lights, which served as both the fill and separation and a portable flash to light her face.



that comes from old, multi-paned windows that line all four sides of the building.

- Farm—This particular location offers a barn, machine sheds, and a sawmill that I can use.
- Local bar—I sometimes shoot at a local bar. Its antique back bar and woodwork have a really cool turn-of-the-century look.

Before arriving at locations with my subject, I sought out the property owners and managers and negotiated the use of their facilities. In some cases, I pay a small shooting fee; in others, I trade my services; and in still others, I buy the owner/manager a gift certificate to a local supper club.

TOP—For Heather's portrait, we decided to use the antique coaches stored at an Altoona railroad yard. **BOTTOM**—Angie wanted a bad-ass location to pose with her early '80s Buick GS, so we used the main alley at the old Eau Claire tire factory. To get permission to work on the site, I only had to ask the property management company and provide proof of insurance. I lit this image with a portable flash, without fill, to allow for maximum contrast.

INSURANCE

The main objection property owners have when it comes to photographing models on their property is their liability, so you'll need to provide insurance and, in some cases, name them on your umbrella policy. Once you're past that objection, the other arrangements are pretty easy to negotiate. It's totally worth it, because working at locations like these will give you portrait looks that your clients can't get anywhere else.



NATURAL LOCATIONS



Shooting in natural locations also gives you the opportunity to create portrait looks that you can't get in the studio. If you choose remote or exclusive (private) locations, you'll be able to create images with a look that your competition can't touch. Here are a few of my favorite locales:

THE BEACH

This isn't actually one location—it's a number of sandbars along the Eau Claire River and a couple of public beaches at area lakes. I try to keep things



DISCRETION ADVISED

Use your discretion when posing and photographing scantily clad portrait subjects in public areas.

TOP—It's clear that Amanda had some fun in this portrait taken at Big Falls. A portable strobe served as the main light. The light that reflected off the water provided fill, and hazy sunlight served as a separation light. Having her pose body-down but propped on her elbows created a pretty arch in her back, giving her curves. Bending her left leg completed the feminine S curve. **BOTTOM**—This cave along Nine-Mile Creek was the perfect location for a shot of Roxy and her python. She and her husband raise and sell exotic reptiles, and there's an allusion to Adam and Eve when you pose a sexy woman with a snake. The creek carved out this cave and, even though we posed her in the opening, the overhang kept direct light out. To remedy this, we used a large reflector to bounce light onto her.

simple and use just three lights (main, fill, and separation). The ambient light is usually my fill.

Sunlight, early and late when it's not too intense, can be the main light, but more often, I'll use it as a separation light and opt for a portable flash or reflector as my main light.

THE WATERFALL

I work at my waterfall location much as I do at the beach. The moving water, rocks, rapids, and pools give me a setting with a unique look. Posing is about the same on location as it is in the studio, only outdoors, you sometimes need to change

your subject's orientation to the light, since the light is in a fixed position. You may find that, for best results, you also need to move auxiliary lights (or reflectors) in relation to that fixed natural light.

A FIELD OF FLOWERS

Wildflowers and prairie grasses grow in our area CRP (land that's set aside for agricultural purposes) in the absence of crops. These flowers won't necessarily be in the same fields year after year, and they often grow bordering rural roads. I use the same approach outlined above when lighting and posing the subject here.

LEFT—We used the Rule of Twos to make this wintry “Snow White” image of Robin. A large reflector provided the main light, and we used the sunlight for separation. **RIGHT**—I love the wildflowers that grow in CRP fields (agricultural areas set aside through a Federal initiative). We lit this shot of Tara with only the hazy sunlight from above. We used the Rule of Thirds to compose the image and posed her to show off her curves.



BLACK & WHITE IMAGES

By now, you know most of my techniques start in the camera, and high-contrast black & white is no exception. The key to getting the look you want is slight overexposure; too much, and you'll get patches of white with no detail, so go a little easy. You can tell how much to overexpose by testing a few images in Photoshop. Open an image and select the Eyedropper tool. Move the tool over the image and watch the Info palette. If you sample the brightest highlight, you should get a value of not quite 255 (pure white). If you're in the 245 to 254 range, you're right on the money.



My favorite camera for high-contrast black & white images is the Fuji FinePix S-1 Pro. Even though it's a digital dinosaur, it still produces a look I like, especially when the subject is lit correctly. The files look great right out of the camera and need little postproduction work. Even though the camera only creates a 6-megapixel file—only 3 megapixels in black & white mode—I can output up to 20x24-inch print without pixilation. You can also create great, high-contrast looks using Nik Silver Efex Pro, a Photoshop plug-in.

The S-1 has a black & white mode that produces an RGB file with no color information. If you use this camera, set the sharpening and the tone to hard, then overexpose by 1 to 2 stops. Your black & white files will be ready to go, right out of the camera.

If you are using a digital camera without a black & white function (or if there's any chance you might need a color file), shoot the image as I've described above, then use the Lab Color approach to convert the color files to black & white. Here's how it's done:

The reverse two-thirds view is a striking pose, particularly in black & white, as shown in this modeling image we created for Brittany. As I do to create most of my high-contrast black & white shots, I used two main lights—a medium strip light just behind the subject and angled slightly toward the camera, and a second small strip light slightly in front of the model and angled up from below to create a wrap-around light. Separation light was provided by an overhead unit.

CLOTHING ALERT

The eye is drawn first to the point of highest contrast in the frame. When your subject wears a black top, attention is drawn to her beautiful face.

- Open your file in Photoshop. Go to Image>Mode>Lab Color.
- In the Channels palette, select the Lightness channel.
- Go to Image>Mode>Grayscale.
- Go to Image>Mode>RGB.

Now you have a black & white file with fairly high contrast and, if you've shot the image properly, it may have the look you want with no further editing required. If the contrast isn't quite there, go to Image>Adjustments>Curves. First, I raise the center point until I can, using the eyedropper tool, sample a value between 240 and 250 in the high-lights. I then create a second point to the right of the center point, and I move it to the left to increase contrast. I sample the area again. If it meets the specs above, I'm in business.

When shooting for black & white, I typically use fashion light or short light. For fashion light, I'll use a large softbox above the camera angle and a strip box below the lens and overexpose by 1 to 1½ stops. For short-light setups, I place a large softbox (you can use a silver-lined umbrella instead) at 45 degrees to the right or left of the camera and a separation light from above and slightly behind the subject. Since you want a lot of contrast, you don't necessarily need a fill light, but feel free to experiment. Another option is to add a secondary main light below and to the same side as the first main to produce wrap-around light.



TOP—I used my Fuji S-1 to take this gorgeous black & white image of Robyn. When used in black & white mode, this camera shoots only a black & white file, and it handles the 1 to 1½ stop overexposure better than many cameras. **BOTTOM**—We typically use white or black backgrounds for this type of black & white. Shot with a Canon 5D Mark II, I used Nik Silver Efex Pro to do the color-to-black & white conversion. When I sell the image as a high-contrast black & white image, the expectation is that it will be only black & white, so I don't let them know it's possible to make this a color image.

ENHANCING THE EYES

The eyes can be piercing, soft and inviting, sexy, coy, or aloof. As the old saying goes, they are the windows to the soul. They are also the most important feature of a face, so I want to make them stand out as much as possible. The more tightly the image is framed to a subject's face, the more important taking the following steps will be.

In Photoshop, select the Lasso tool. Then, in the tool options, set a little feathering. For most files, you'll want a setting of about 20 pixels. You'll use more feathering for a close head shot and less as you get more and more body in the frame. Using the tool, select the eyes. Then, apply a little sharpening with the Unsharp Mask filter. Using the sliders, I set the amount at 75 to 100 percent, the radius to 2.0 to 2.5 pixels, and the threshold at 7 to 9 levels (these settings will vary with the resolution of your file).

Next, choose the Burn tool. Set the range to shadows and the exposure to about 4 to 7 percent. Zoom in close and, with a small brush, burn the dark ring around the iris of her eyes. Then choose

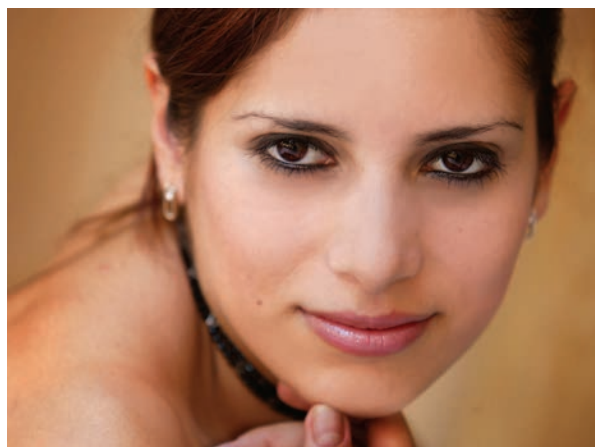
a smaller brush and draw a faint line along the upper and lower eyelid (you're putting on electronic eyeliner). Finally, trace the outline of the more prominent eyelashes (electronic mascara). Repeat for each eye.

To complete the eyes, choose the Dodge tool. Set the Range to highlight and the Exposure at 6 to 10 percent. Choose a brush size that will cover most of the whites of her eye, then gently dodge to whiten them. Don't overdo this, or she'll look like an alien. Repeat for each eye. *Note:* If your image is a tight shot and the eyes are large in the frame, you can select the whites with your Lasso tool and adjust the Curves to achieve the same effect.

If the subject is blond, you may also want to burn-in her eyebrows a little. Depending on how light the brows are, you may need to set the Burn tool's Range to midtones rather than shadows.

Here, we see the original image (left), the eyes enhanced with the Burn tool (center), and the finishing touches to the eyes made with the Dodge tool (right). The differences should be subtle.





INTENSIFYING THE EYE COLOR

If you position a reflector under the eyes, it'll lighten the iris opposite the catchlight, making the eyes come alive.

You can enhance this effect in postproduction using Photoshop's Dodge tool. Choose a brush size that is slightly narrower than the subject's iris, then set the Range to midtones and the Exposure to about 10 percent. Apply a stroke or two opposite the catchlight.

To enhance the subject's eye color, choose the Sponge tool and set the mode to Saturate and the Flow to about 40 percent. A stroke or two around the iris will add vibrancy and snap. Don't overdo this, as it will look unnatural.



LEFT—Two of the most beautiful eyes I have ever seen belong to Merit. This image was taken in an open doorway. I placed a reflector in front of and below her in order to reflect skylight into her eyes and brighten her brown irises. Her eyes were enhanced in postproduction using the Dodge and Sponge tools. Her eyeliner and lashes were darkened using the Burn tool. **ABOVE**—Vibrant eyes start with great lighting. A low reflector put the light into Brenda's eyes in this window light image. Using the Sponge tool at 40 percent opacity gave her eye color a boost, but the effect looks natural.

THE LIPS AND TEETH

THE LIPS

To improve the appearance of your subject's lips, do a bit of work in Photoshop. First, choose the Brush tool. Set the Opacity at 75 to 90 percent (depending on her lip or lipstick color) and the Flow at 6 to 10 percent, then set the Mode to color. Next, sample her lip color. Select a small, soft brush (about $\frac{1}{8}$ the width of her lips) and trace the edges of her mouth, adding electronic lip liner. Then, enlarge your brush to the width of her lips or slightly smaller. Lower your Flow setting to 4 to 6 percent and reduce the Opacity setting to about 70 percent. Brush over the subject's lips to enhance their color.



If her lips need a little more color, use Photoshop's Sponge tool, but be careful not to touch the skin around the lips because the skin will oversaturate, taking on an undesirable orange cast.

THE TEETH

To make the teeth look their best, select the Lasso tool, set the feathering at 5 to 10 pixels, and outline the subject's teeth. Next, go to Image>Adjustments>Curves. Put a point on the center of the diagonal line and pull it upward slightly. Don't overdo this, or she'll look like an alien.

I tend to shy away from filling in gaps or fixing broken teeth. I won't do it unless I absolutely

PUCKER UP!

Subtle enhancements made in Photoshop can help ensure that your subject's lips look their very best. The lips are pretty important in a glamour portrait, so take a few minutes of your time to make your subject's lips look kissable. The subject's significant other is sure to approve!

These images show the lips before (top) and after (bottom) enhancement. In Photoshop, I completed four simple steps: (1) I selected the Burn tool, set the Shadows to 6 or 8, and applied virtual lip liner. (2) I used the Eyedropper tool to sample her lip color and used the Brush tool to paint out any cracks or dry skin on her lips. (3) I selected the Sponge tool and set the Saturation to 40 percent. I chose a brush size that suited her mouth and painted over her lips. (4) Finally, I added fullness by going to Liquefy>Bloat. I set the brush's Density to 20, Pressure to 30, and Rate at 20, then stroked over her lips.



Here is Brittany, before and after whitening her teeth using Photoshop's Hue/Saturation adjustment. Be careful to make a really close selection of the teeth using the Lasso tool with no more than 10 pixels of feathering.

have to. Whitening teeth is the enhancement I do most. For pleasing results, you've got to be precise when selecting the teeth. The easiest way to do it is to make a selection with Photoshop's Lasso tool, using little feathering (5 to 15 pix-

els should be plenty). Select her teeth and go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Using the Saturation slider, desaturate the image by 20 to 50 percent. This will eliminate any discoloration, making her teeth visibly whiter but not unnatural.

ENHANCING THE SKIN

BASIC RETOUCHING

Great skin is critical in glamour portraits. Use the Clone Stamp tool or the Healing Brush to eliminate scars or blemishes. Select a brush that is slightly larger than the flaw, then sample a clear skin area by pressing and holding Opt/Alt and clicking with your mouse. Finally, brush over the flaw.

To smooth the skin, choose the Brush tool and set the Opacity to 75 to 90 percent (depending on her skin color) and the Flow at 6 to 10 percent. Press Opt/Alt and click to sample the skin tone in the area of her face you'd like to smooth. As you move to different areas of her face, keep sampling her skin tone for a natural look. What you want to do is smooth the skin and reduce wrinkles, lines,

eye bags, etc. If you overdo it, your subject won't look natural.

MAKE HER GLOW

After doing basic retouching, you can add a great glow to her skin:

1. Go to Layer>Duplicate Layer.
2. Go to Filter>Distort>Diffuse Glow. In the dialog box that appears, play with the sliders to get just the look you want.
3. Go to Edit>Fade Diffuse Glow. There are several Mode options. My favorites are normal, hard light, and soft light. You'll want to experiment to get the look you want. For further control, adjust the opacity of the effect. The lower the opacity, the more the original image will show through. Again, you'll have to experiment to find the look you want.

I also like to use Imagenomic's Portraiture Photoshop plug-in to create a digital glow—it's an inexpensive and useful piece of software. (The plug-in offers lots of options, so go ahead and experiment.) To smooth and add a hint of glow to the skin, I'll use either the default or normal setting. I make a background layer, apply the filter, create a Reveal All layer mask, and choose a brush that fits the subject's eyes. I paint them out at 100 percent opacity to retain the sharpness. I do the same for her eyebrows.

TOP—Ilicia's original image. **BOTTOM**—Here's the shot after Photoshop's Diffuse Glow filter was applied.





TOP—Here, we see an image before (left) and after (right) Imagenomic's Portraiture plug-in was applied. Note that the glow is more subtle than that achieved using the Diffuse Glow option. **BOTTOM**—Here, we see an image before the Porcelain Skin effect was applied (left) and after (right).

Next, I reduce the opacity to 75 percent and paint her lips, using a brush sized to fit. I reduce the opacity to 45 to 50 percent and paint a transition zone around the subject's eyes, eyebrows, and the bottom of her nose. This is a quick fix. The whole procedure takes about a minute.

PORCELAIN SKIN

Another great skin enhancement is what I call Porcelain Skin. Here's how it's done:

1. Go to Layer>Duplicate Layer.
2. Go to Filter>Diffuse Glow. Set the sliders as you like (my preferred settings are Grain: 0 or 1; Glow: 8 to 10; Clear: 8 to 15).
3. Go to Fade>Diffuse Glow. From the mode drop-down menu, select Hard Light. Then, reduce the opacity to roughly 70 percent.
4. Go to Filter>Blur>Smart Blur. Set the Radius at 5 to 7, the Threshold at 25, and the Quality to medium.
5. Go to the Layers palette and reduce the opacity of the duplicated layer. A setting of 50 to 80 percent usually works; feel free to experiment.

A DUAL APPROACH

I often use Diffuse Glow and Porcelain Skin together, but you don't have to.

THE LIQUIFY FILTER

Making the figure look its best requires careful posing. But today, software can be used to further enhance and flatter our subjects.

Before Photoshop 6 was released, I painstakingly used the Clone Stamp tool to whittle a waistline. The addition of the Liquify filter has since made that technique obsolete. With this tool, you can flatter a woman's figure like never before.

The key to success is to make your enhancements look believable. I use corrective posing strategies to get the best-possible result right out of the camera, then use the Liquify filter to tweak it.

MUM IS THE WORD

Some photographers make proportional enhancements, tell the subject about them, then charge them for making the refinements. I have a different outlook. I believe that my clients only need to know that they look great—and that I made them look that way.

Rita is full-figured. For this calendar image (December, of course), I wanted to visually slim her. In a kneeling pose, I had her lean forward and arch her back to lengthen and tighten her torso. By kicking up her heel, we created nice curves, and her right thigh covers part of the left. The camera was angled to shoot into her hip, giving her upper and lower body equal length. Turning her shoulders made them look wider and visually narrowed her waist. After posing her optimally, we used Photoshop's Liquify filter to take 10 pounds off her middle, fix the bulge under her right shoulder, and smooth a little skin pinched by twisting her shoulders.





The athletic training that Tara does makes her legs look a little on the heavy side (left). I used Photoshop's Liquify filter to slim them slightly (right). *Note:* Tara's image was used for a local radio station's calendar. Not only did I get a sale, but the radio station paid in trade for the glamour session, so I got plenty of advertising value as well. It was a win-win.



In the original image, Julie has a little tummy. I used the Liquify filter to gently smooth the area.

BIG SALES

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

The sales process begins long before the glamour session—it starts with the consultation. You need to have a clear understanding of what it is your subject wants well before you start clicking the shutter. After all, it makes no sense to spend hours making images in hopes that you'll stumble across something your subject likes.

As mentioned earlier, it's important to create a client questionnaire that helps you identify what your subject likes about herself and what appeals to her aesthetically. You'll also want to determine who the portrait recipient will be. With these questions

answered, you'll be able to conceptualize a portrait that will please your subject—and result in sales.

Be sure to expose your subject to the many products you offer before she views the images from her session, too. In doing so, you plant a seed so that many subjects buy much more than a simple print. Needless to say, the more options the subject has, the bigger your sales potential.

SCREENINGS

I use slide show programs to show clients their images immediately following each session. I've learned that post-shoot screenings work better

When your subject sees their portraits immediately following the session, their enthusiasm is still at its peak, and this can mean bigger sales.





When you display images in your studio and in public, make sure they are shots that any woman can easily see herself in.

than proofing sessions held at some future date because the client is still feeling the emotional rush from their exciting session.

comfortable, high-quality proofing experience for your client.

SETTING THE MOOD

I conduct private screenings in my sales room. The images are shown on a 10-foot screen that is bordered by heavy drapes that look like old-fashioned stage curtains. Wall portraits and galleries in various sizes grace the walls. Music is piped in from high-quality speakers that are recessed in the walls.

We've used various programs to produce our slide shows but currently use Pro Select (from Australia) and iPhoto. The biggest thing to remember is that you want to provide a

MORE SALES TIPS

Glamour sessions won't likely be your bread and butter. Most of your subjects will be 18 to 35 years old, and the younger the client, the less lucrative the session. However, you will profit from building a relationship with young clients that keeps them coming back to your studio time and again. Also, be sure to do some shots in more modest clothing (think street clothes). These almost always sell and can add 35 to 40 percent to your profits.

CONCLUSION

I find creating glamour images personally rewarding. There's something artistically satisfying, sexy, and cool about creating stylistic and sensual images that describe what makes a particular woman alluring and feminine. Glamour clients are also among the most appreciative you'll ever photograph, which is a great reward in and of itself.

Still, it would be misleading for me to suggest that glamour photography is a no-fail way to get rich. At my studio, weddings are still the highest-priced offering, while high-school senior sessions

are the most profitable. The typical glamour client, on the other hand, is in her twenties and probably at least a little strapped for cash.

But think about what this means. At some time in the near future, your glamour client will likely get married. Since she has a great relationship with you and your studio, you'll probably book her wedding. You'll meet her fiancé and shoot their engagement session. She may even want to book another glamour session for a wedding gift (I often throw these in for free).

LEFT—My first session with Tarina was a model mini-session in which we created images like this black & white head shot. **RIGHT**—Our next session was held about a year later. This time, she posed for “Girls of the Valley”—a local radio station’s calendar. We didn’t end up using this image—her bare breasts were a little too much for the calendar—but we both loved it.





After that, she'll get pregnant. That's a milestone that requires artistic documentation. After her child is born, she'll want photos of the baby. Soon, she'll be calling to schedule her first family session—and another session every five years or so. Of course, she'll probably have more kids.

While your client might have been strapped for cash at twenty-two or twenty-three, guess who's making a lot of the two-income decisions now? Soon, expect another glamour session just to reaffirm that she still looks good after having kids.

You get the idea. That glamour session can turn into a twenty-year (or longer) business relationship—and, let's face it, the opportunity for a new and lasting friendship. A glamour session that inspires trust and makes your client feel good about herself is a great entry point into someone's life.



TOP—Three years later, Tarina called me to schedule an engagement session with her fiancé, Drew. They showed me a magazine ad that featured a couple in a fountain, and we loosely based this image on it.

BOTTOM—A little over a year later, I photographed the couple's wedding. What started with a glamour mini-session grew into a great, five-year relationship.

INDEX

A

Adobe Photoshop, 79–87
Ambient light, 71
Aperture, 13, 72
Atmosphere, studio, 28

B

Background lighting, 12, 15, 54, 58, 61, 69
Backdrops, 15, 54, 56, 60–61, 79
Barndoors, 39, 69
Black & white images, 15, 36, 66, 67, 78–79
Boudoir portraits, 9
Breasts, enhancing, 28, 50
Broad lighting, 36, 37
Bridal glamour, 7
Butterfly lighting, 14, 38

C

Catchlights, 37
Camera angle, 11, 13, 16, 25, 45, 52, 62
Clients, prospective, 6–7
Clothing, 9, 30, 32–33, 79
Color cast, 8
Composition, 13
Consultation, 25
Coppertone lighting, 8, 12, 38, 68–69

D

Depth of field, 13
Diffusers, 64
Dimension, 36–37, 64
Dressing rooms, 28–29, 30

E

Elvgren, Gil, 18
Expression, facial, 32, 52, 61

Eyes, 13, 37, 80–81

F

Fabric, 33, 57
Faces, 34
Facial views, 10, 40–41, 62
 full-face, 40
 profiles, 41, 62
 two-thirds, 10, 41, 62
Family photography, 91
Fashion images, 14
Fashion lighting, 36
Fill light, 12, 13, 16, 21, 22, 35, 41, 54, 63, 65, 67, 69, 75, 76, 77, 79
Fire, 32, 61
Fitness portraits, 6, 27
Fog machine, 54, 58
Friends attending session, 7, 28
Full-length portraits, 12, 13

G

Gels, 58
Gifts, 9
Group portraits, 7

H

Hair, 30, 66–67
Head shots, 12, 13, 15, 90
High key, 8, 15, 45, 56–57
Hobbies, 6
Hot lights, 8, 12, 38, 68–69
Hurrell, George, 69

I

Image editing, 52, 79–87
Insurance, 75

L

LCD, 10, 24, 73
Legs, 18, 42, 48–49

Lens flare, 71

Lens selection, 16

Lighting, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 54, 58, 61, 62–63, 64, 65, 67–69, 70–71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81

 ambient, 71

 background, 12, 15, 54, 58, 61, 69

 broad, 36, 37

 butterfly, 14, 38

 fill, 12, 13, 16, 21, 22, 35, 41, 54, 63, 65, 67, 69, 75, 76, 77, 79

 hot lights, 8, 12, 38, 68–69

 loop, 38, 39, 73

 main, 12, 14, 16, 22, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 54, 56, 63, 65, 66, 67, 71, 72, 76, 77, 79

 mirrors, 20, 62–63

 natural, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 24, 70–71

 ratios, 62

 reflectors, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 27, 35, 64, 65, 68, 70, 76, 77, 81

 Rembrandt, 38

 separation, 8, 12, 22, 65, 66, 69, 71, 72, 74, 77, 78, 79

 short, 34, 36

 softboxes, 15, 20, 21, 36, 62
 split, 37

 spotlights, 68–69

 strip boxes, 16, 21

 stobes, 15, 20, 22, 25, 27, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70–71, 72–73, 74, 75, 76–77

(Lighting, cont'd)

theater cans, 69
tungsten, 8, 12, 28
video lights, 37, 69
window, 13, 21, 24, 30, 35, 64–65
Light modifiers, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 36, 39, 62–63, 64, 65, 69, 70
barn doors, 39, 69
diffusers, 64
mirrors, 20, 62–63
reflectors, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 27, 35, 64, 65, 68, 70, 76, 77, 81
softboxes, 15, 20, 21, 36, 62
snoots, 20
strip boxes, 16, 21
Lino, Robert, 44
Lips, 13, 82
Location sessions, 70–71, 74–75, 76–77
Loop lighting, 38, 39, 73

M

Main lights, 12, 14, 16, 22, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 54, 56, 63, 65, 66, 67, 71, 72, 76, 77, 79
Magazines, 14, 36
Makeup, 30, 36, 66
Mirrors, 20, 62–63
Mylar, 36, 56, 63

N

Natural light, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 24, 30, 35, 64–65, 70–71
Nudes, 6, 10, 29, 60

O

Outdoor portraits, 9, 14, 70–71
Overhead light, 11

P

Pin-up portraits, 18, 51, 65
Plexiglas, 62–63
Plug-ins, 79, 84–85
Pornography, 9
Portfolios, 22
Portrait length, 12, 13, 15, 18, 90
full-length, 12, 13
head shots, 12, 13, 15, 90
three-quarter, 18
Posing, 8, 11, 12, 14, 25, 41, 42, 43, 44–45, 46–49, 52, 77, 86, 87; *see also* Facial views *and* Portrait length
corrective, 46–49, 86, 87
C pose, 8, 12, 42, 43
reverse, 41
Rule of Twos, 42, 43, 52, 77
S pose, 12, 14, 25, 44–45
Products, 6, 16, 26–27, 52
Props, 8

Q

Questionnaire, client, 24, 25, 88

R

Radio slaves, 70–71
Recipient, portrait, 6, 7
Reflections, 36, 56, 62–63
Reflectors, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 27, 35, 64, 65, 68, 70, 76, 77, 81
Rembrandt lighting, 38
Rule of Thirds, 13, 77
Rule of Twos, 42, 43, 52, 77

S

Sales, 88–89
Screenings, 22, 25, 88–89
Separation, 8, 12, 22, 65, 66, 69, 71, 72, 74, 77, 78, 79
Shoes, 18, 32
Short lighting, 34, 36
Shutter speed, 72

Silhouettes, 21
Skin, 84–85
Slide shows, 22, 25, 88–89
Slimming the subject, 46–49, 86, 87
Snoots, 20
Softboxes, 15, 20, 21, 36, 62
Split lighting, 37
Spotlights, 68–69
Strobes, 15, 20, 22, 25, 27, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70–71, 72–73, 74, 75, 76–77
Styles, glamour portrait, 12–23, 65
artistic, 16–17
classic beauty, 12–13
fashion, 14–15
pin-ups, 18, 65
provocative, 22–23
sensual, 20–21
Sunny 16 Rule, 72

T

Teeth, 82–83
Theater cans, 69
Touching the subject, 29
Tungsten lighting, 8, 12, 28

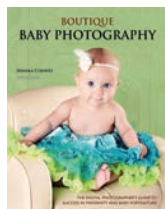
V

Vargas, Alberto, 18
Video lights, halogen, 37, 69

W

Wedding gifts, 6–7
Wedding photography, 91
Wet look, the, 66
White balance, 37
Window light, 13, 21, 24, 30, 35, 64–65
Wireless triggers, *see* Radio slaves

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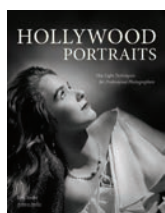
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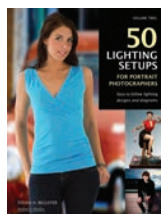
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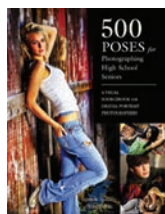
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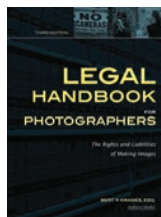
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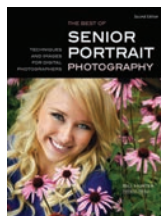
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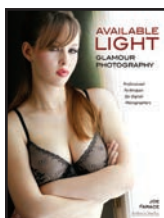
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Backdrops and Backgrounds

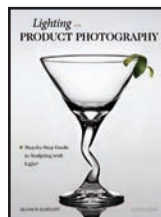
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LEARN HOW TO:

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- Refine your results with postproduction strategies to correct common appearance concerns
- Create demand for your style of glamour photography
- Work with subjects for fun, profitable sessions